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HITS A LITTLE TOO CLOSE TO HOME

[BY PAUL MATWYCHUK • 36]

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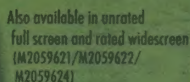
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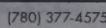


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three dollar bill

By RICHARD BURNETT

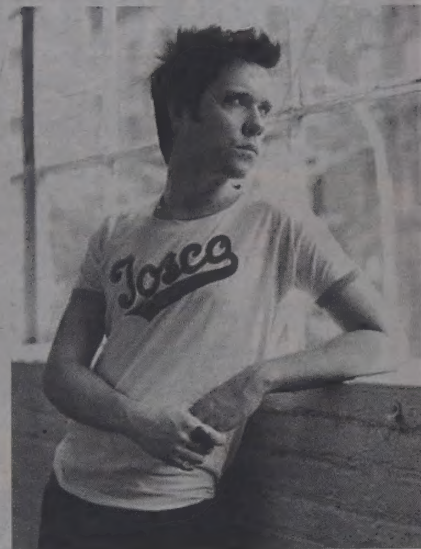
Fountains of Wainwright

When I shake hands with Rufus Wainwright before a late-morning interview at the bustling Café Figaro in Montreal, I can't help but notice his gorgeous ring and exquisite fingers.

That was about all that looked good, though, because otherwise Wainwright looked like shit—fashionably shit, mind you—since he'd just gotten off a plane from New York City and come straight to Figaro, stopping only to drop his luggage off at his downtown home.

This is not the same Rufus I saw last year. This is the rehabbed Rufus, the reminted 30-year-old who hasn't shied away from discussing his recent addiction to crystal meth to

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Storm troopers

A hike into the mountains of Peru—and a lightning-fast descent just in time for New Year's Eve

By SASHA UHLMANN

Four in the morning comes way too early, even in Peru. We dug ourselves out of the pit we'd created in the middle of our box spring mattress and I stumbled across the room to turn on the single bulb that hung precariously from the ceiling. After throwing on our stale hiking clothes, my partner Wendy and I hefted our packs onto our backs and stepped out into the predawn gloom.

The mountain town of Cabanaconde was alive and bustling. Farmers passed by carrying baskets of alfalfa and beans, livestock roamed at will and terrible pop music was already blaring from broken speakers (or perhaps it had never been turned off). We walked up the main street, dodging donkeys and their excrement, until we found the "main" hostel in town. Three minutes later our guide showed up carrying a small day pack—we never did find out what was in it—and wearing old leather sandals. Lollo was his name, pronounced Yo-yo, which I later decided

was because he could bounce up and down mountains. He was a local farmer and had agreed to guide us over the mountains to a remote lake.

Unfortunately, Lollo spoke less English than we did Spanish, which meant communication was reduced to a lot of arm waving and hand signals. Friends who were tour guides in the area had introduced us to him and told us this hike was a must for the "remoteness, views and pristine waters." We were assured a tranquil base camp for day hikes, including fresh streams for drinking water. Our original plan had been to do a seven-day hike over the mountains to the city of Arequipa, but no one would take us because the rainy season was about to start and too many people were killed in thunder storms. This hike was our safer consolation prize.

BECAUSE WE WERE too proud to let our guide help with our ridiculous loads, we trudged after him as he bounded through terraced fields and over ancient rock retaining walls. Our first order of business was to scale a 2,000-metre "hill" which would bring us to an altitude of over 5,000 metres. The trail, which zig-zagged up to the summit, was an ancient path that the Wari people had used (and probably tribes before them as well) more than 1,000 years ago to collect shells and food from the ocean a few weeks' hike



Wari ruins and the peak of Huaca Huaca rising in the background.

Photos by Wendy Kerr

away. Stone staircases they had laid down, later improved by the Incas, still provided solid footing.

About halfway up, the effects of the altitude became a problem. We had been chewing cocoa leaves the whole way up, which are supposed to help with acclimation, but apparently we hadn't chewed enough. My head started pounding and my breathing became shallow and rapid. I turned around to see how Wendy

was doing, only to find she had stopped and was hyperventilating. We dropped our packs and sat, trying to catch our breath. After a few minutes, we were both breathing near normal, so we picked up our bags and resumed. It was then that Lollo came bounding back down the trail to see what was taking so long.

Three and a half thigh-burning hours later, we hit what appeared to be the crest of the hill. We turned back and took in an amazing view. Two thousand metres below, the small town was now fully bathed in morning sun and the surrounding mountains reflected the light back off their jagged, snowy peaks onto the terraced land below. Between the mountains to the north and Cabanaconde was the popular Colca Canyon, one of the world's deepest canyons.

Thinking we had finally reached

AFTER ANOTHER couple hours of up, our path finally began to level out. The trail proceeded on an ancient stone road that wove its way through hills and past dormant volcanoes. After reaching another pass, decorated with giant rock piles and flags, we could look down upon a large plain surrounded by snowy peaks. Maculca Lake was somewhere in the middle. As we descended to the lake, I was grimly aware of the darkening skies that had come over the mountains from the south. By the time we reached the lake, heavy black clouds blotted out the sun and thunder could be heard in the dis-

SEE PAGE 8

JERRY JERIRY & THE SONS OF THE RHYTHM ORCHESTRA



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INTERNET

Dubya and Microsoft battle spam with full-court press

TORONTO—The fight against email spam is apparently off to a roaring start this week after the New York Attorney-General and the Microsoft Corporation announced last Friday that they are launching an \$18.8 billion USD lawsuit against a host of alleged spammers—among them the notorious Toronto-based company Teslianet.

Last Tuesday, President George W. Bush signed legislation, effective January 1, that sets fines and prison terms for spammers who use unsolicited emails to sell porn, cheap loans and virility pills. The suit, built on the strength of an investigation by Attorney-General Eliot Spitzer, alleges that the defendants used fake names, forged email addresses and a network of more than 500 compromised computers, including a few in the Kuwaiti Finance Ministry and a Seoul hospital, according to a story in the *National Post*—which seems like a lot of work just to send out a shitload of Paris Hilton video offers.

Thankfully, the plaintiffs seem to realize that the new legislation will likely fail in its attempt to scare off spammers strictly because their wares are now considered illegal. Instead, the objective is simple, according to Spitzer: use the legal system to drive these companies into bankruptcy.

Tim Cranton, a Microsoft spokesman, likewise stated that the goal of the suit is to "take back all of the illegally gained profits that these companies have earned from the spamming activity." The lawsuit seeks penalties of \$500 USD for every fraudulent act—such as using fake names and subject lines—that violates state laws prohibiting deceptive business practices.

But will the lawsuit have its desired effect? Scott Richter, the president of Opt-InRealBig.com LLC and ranked as the third-most-prolific spammer in the world, didn't sound too shaken up by the whole thing. In an interview with the *Post*, he shrugged off the lawsuit as a frivolous PR stunt, saying that "if the New York Attorney-General had anything, he would have sought to have criminal charges filed, like in other cases in the past. He doesn't have anything." The article makes no mention as to whether or not Richter followed up this comment by audibly gulping a bottle of HGH and emphatically noting how young and incredibly virile he felt. And all for only \$29.95! —CHRIS BOUTET

Ukrainian government erects legal firewall

KIEV—In other internet news, while the Americans are trying to stamp out spam, Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma brought forth an equally unrealistic but far more sinister law this week to ban the publication, on the Internet and elsewhere, of material promoting terrorism, the overthrow of the state or



material depicting pornography.

Under the government-proposed legislation, which was adopted by the Ukrainian parliament back on November 20 but is just now coming into effect, it is illegal to publish calls to overthrow the state or forcibly alter the country's constitution, pornographic material or that which promotes terrorism, violence and discrimination.

According to a report by L'Agence France-Presse, the new law will affect both print and online media, which naturally has made more than a few media types kind of sad. In particular, it has raised the ire of the international press freedom group Reporters Without Borders, who fear the legislation is too vague and conducive to abuse by a government already well known for its attempts to silence media dissent. (Many have accused Kuchma of ordering the killing of Ukrainiansky Pravda editor Georgy Gongadze after his decapitated body was found in a forest near Kiev in November 2000.)

Regardless, I guess that means I have no choice but to reluctantly take down my highly popular website, www.terrorist-sluts-hot-for-Ukrainian-parliamentary-reform.com. —CHRIS BOUTET

BUSINESS

Levi's and EDE put positive spin on local plant closure

EDMONTON—Thanks to the pressures of globalization and the economic benefits of moving relatively high-paying Canadian jobs to low-paying Latin American and Asian nations, Levi Strauss & Company is closing the doors of its Edmonton plant in March. But Economic Development Edmonton has announced a new initiative to help the 488 workers who'll be losing their jobs. EDE and Levi's will partner in a plan to retrain these employees and help them find jobs.

Levi's is closing all three of its Canadian plants (the company also operates factories in Stoney Creek and Brantford,

both in southern Ontario). It claims that "global competitive pressures" is the main reason it's cutting the Canuck jobs. Just four years ago, Levi's invested nearly \$1 million in a new laser cutter system for the Edmonton plant.

Levi's will also close its last two remaining factories in San Antonio, Texas, meaning that the one of the most famous names in the American garment business will no longer be making any products on its home soil. In 2001, Levi's closed its famous San Francisco plant, although the company is still headquartered in the bay area. According to the *San Francisco Chronicle*, the company has been steadily losing money and has a debt load of \$2.3 billion USD.

"We've resisted all of the pressures that have been upon us to close plants," Levi's chairman Robert Haas told the *Chronicle* when the cuts were announced. "As you know, we are one of the very last major companies that has any kind of a manufacturing presence in North America any more.... Belatedly and reluctantly, we're having to follow in the footsteps of other apparel manufacturers."

"With continued strong economic growth and low unemployment in greater Edmonton, we believe these skilled Levi's workers have many opportunities to find new, meaningful employment," said Allan Scott, EDE's president and CEO. "The task at hand is to connect new opportunities with these talented, hard working people."

Called the "Levi's 488" project, the company and EDE will create "skill summaries" of employees and will hold an employee fair early in the new year to showcase the soon-to-be-cut staff.

EDE will target employers in areas like agri-food, advanced manufacturing and tourism, as well as health-related industries. "All of the employees of our Edmonton facility are highly productive, with an excellent work ethic, and use the latest textile manufacturing equipment, giving them many transferable skills," said Heather Majeau, human resources manager for the company's Edmonton operation. "We have an employee

committee set up that will help their colleagues with career transition support. Working with EDE and the community support they are generating, will have a great impact on the work that our staff committee will be able to accomplish."

Looks like Levi's is trying to put a positive spin on an ugly decision. After all, they did replace skilled Canadian workers with foreign labour that's only a few steps removed from the sweatshop. —STEVEN SANDOR

POLITICS

Liberals defend corporate tax cut

OTTAWA—Ralph Goodale, Canada's new minister of finance, became the first member of Paul Martin's new Liberal cabinet to fire heated volleys at the opposition with his heavy criticisms of New Democrat leader Jack Layton.

Goodale rejected Layton's calls for the Liberals to cancel a corporate tax cut scheduled for January 1 and chided the NDP leader for spreading false economic information to the public. The NDP claims that the government would save \$4.4 billion by not reducing the corporate tax rate.

"Canadians deserve the facts," said Goodale. "Mr. Layton's numbers are simply wrong and he is trying to obscure the true benefits of tax cuts—namely jobs and economic growth."

Before corporate taxes started being rolled back in 2001, they stood at 28 per cent. They have been steadily whittled down and, with the January 1 cut, will drop from 23 per cent to 21 per cent. Goodale said the saving passed on to Canada's corporations by this next two percentage point chop will only be \$1.1 billion, which he claims will be offset by extra taxes brought in due to strong economic growth expected in 2004.

Still, for Canada to save \$4 billion or more, the government would have to boost corporate taxes to pre-2001 levels. —STEVEN SANDOR

!

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By STEVEN SANDOR

Atheism is enough

I grew up in a fairly normal Catholic home. I was dutifully put through my first communion, confession and confirmation without any real incident. I was sent to a Catholic high school where I wore a maroon-coloured uniform sweater with grey dress slacks every day. And each Christmas had a touch of mysticism: listening to my parents' favourite devotional Hungarian carols and lighting advent candles at school masses, Jesus was never as present in my life as he was at Christmas.

Decades later, after my faith eroded slowly, my beliefs have come full circle. First I called myself an agnostic. But as the late Douglas Adams pointed out in *The Salmon of Doubt*, agnosticism, like religion, is a cop-out; it betokens "a desire not to have to think about things too much." I soon realized that an abstract God was just as unsettling as the Jewish, Catholic, Baptist or Islamic gods. Besides, I'm very comfortable with the idea that death is our final destination. It's like sleeping in. Forever.

My move to atheism was strictly a solo effort. So at Christmas, things are now ethically challenging—especially around kids, because I don't want tell them their whole belief system is flawed. It's akin to telling a kid there's no Santa Claus. But I'm not one of those non-Christians who thinks that the term "Christmas" marginalizes the minority; I think those people, frankly, are nuts. Christmas has been recognized for nearly two millennia and goodwill towards men is a pretty good thing, so why screw with it?

Personally, I'm comforted that Jesus is now on a level with Santa; they're both fictional representations based on men who lived long ago, men nobody really knows much about nowadays. I've learned to equate Jesus and the three wise men to seeing movies like *Elf*—archetypes meant to pass on the simple message that we should all be nicer to each other.

Believe it or not, I think it's easier for atheists to embrace "goodwill towards men" than Christians. I think it's more difficult for us atheists to fight in wars, because the thought of being shot or bombed is a lot more... er... permanent. I don't think there's a God out there who's going to help us when we screw up real bad. I think those who believe in Armageddon aren't going to be so hot on saving the environment, because the end of the world is part of their manifest destiny.

So fellow atheists and non-believers, raise a glass with me and wish the world a merry Christmas. It won't hurt a bit. ●

Peru hiking

Continued from page 6

tance. However we were distracted by the flocks of flamingos and other beautiful birds that littered the lake, as well as herds of alpacas and wild horses.

We found a flat spot near the shore beside our "fresh" water source, a yellow, silty stream that would need considerable more volume to be considered a trickle. Thank God for chlorine drops. After moving aside heaps of dung, we set up our tent.

Being frugal (read: cheap) travelers, we were only paying Lollo to guide us to the lake and then we'd be on our own. As he readied himself to head back, thunder rocked the mountain in front of us.

"This is safe?" I asked our trusty guide in broken Spanish.

"Si, si, es seguro," he assured me, then turned and bolted off to cover in three hours the distance we had covered in eight.

Our tourist guide friends had mentioned the day before that if you're caught in a thunder and lightning storm, it's best to store all metal objects away from the tent. So we packed our bags with the stove, pots, boots and any other non-essential items with metal and stashed them under a thorny bush 10 metres from the tent. Then the rain hit. Large granules of partially frozen rain pelted us and the ground. I put on my rain jacket (with a metal zipper) and sat beside the tent (with metal poles) watching the storm roll in over the large peak of Huaca Huaca.

Watching the storm advance was incredible. Lightning forked across the sky and the ground shook with every thunderclap. Well, it looked incredible until something on the hill in front of us exploded into flames. Then it was time to crawl in our tent and pray.

HUDDLED INSIDE the tent, we could see and feel the storm pass overhead and seemingly stop right above us. I

closed my eyes and tried to imagine that I was at a bad techno rave with strobe lights, but the grim reality of being stuck at 5,000 metres on a flat plain near a lake made this fantasy difficult. Somehow, probably an innate self-defence mechanism kicking in, we fell asleep. We awoke an hour later to the sounds of thunder off in the distance. We had survived!

The next morning, we both agreed that we'd had our fill of storms and decided to head back to Cabanaconde. The rainy season had finally hit and afternoon thunderstorms were likely to be a daily event. Unfortunately, because we spent all morning boiling water, we got a late start on the return trip. At the first pass we dropped our bags so I could summit an ancient volcano that rose up to the north. I scrambled up the scree slopes and my arrival at the top was greeted with a roar of thunder. Realizing it wasn't smart to be the tallest thing around—okay, so Wendy is a little taller than me, she just hadn't made



Graveyard outside Cabanaconde

it to the top yet—I turned and ran back down the slope. What had taken me 45 minutes to scale took about three minutes to descend. Just as we reached the bottom, the afternoon storm once again began advancing over Huaca Huaca. We took off along the ancient stone road, breaking the land speed record for gringos with backpacks.

The storm chased us the entire way. Finally, we reached the top of the last mountain. Cresting the peak, we were treated to the sight of another thunder storm coming directly towards us from the mountains to the east. We were sandwiched right in the middle. We decided lower was better and began descending the last 1,000 meters to the farms below with lightning blast-

ing the hills around us.

Once again, luck (or divine force) was with us. Not only did we make it back to Cabanaconde alive, we were also just in time for New Year's Eve. We returned to the main hostel and found our guide drinking in the street with friends, listening to ABBA remixes. He laughed when we explained how we'd almost been turned into New Year's fireworks. Instead of showing remorse, he passed us a bottle of sweet champagne and told us to join in the festivities. We spent the rest of the night dancing in the street and drinking away the fear from our close calls. Taking the cue from our Peruvian friend, we let the past slip into sweet memory and embraced the new year with a fresh outlook on life. ●

TOM the DANCING BUG

by RUBEN BOLLING

PRESIDENT BUSH LAID IT OUT VERY CLEARLY--



ONLY THOSE WHO SACRIFICED AND RISKED THEIR LIVES WILL BE ELIGIBLE FOR IRAQ RECONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS. AND SO, I AWARD THE FOLLOWING CONTRACTS:

\$1.3 billion

"Program Management Services - Public Works / Water Resources Sector" to U.S. ARMY SGT. 1st CLASS ED REICH

WOW, I GET IN ON SOME OF THAT WAR PROFITEERING SCRATCH?

SUH-WEET! PARTY AT MY PLACE!

\$2.1 billion

"Program Management Services - Oil Sector" to U.S. ARMY SPC. JEREMY REYES

IT'S BEEN A HELLUVA YEAR. I'M LUCKY TO BE ALIVE. SO AN OPPORTUNITY TO PRICE GOUGE AND FRAUDULENTLY INFLATE COSTS WILL BE A WELCOME CHANGE OF PACE.



\$1.4 billion

"Design - Build IDIQ Construction Services for Transportation Projects" to U.S. ARMY PFC. BENJAMIN SUTTER

HOW WILL I DO IT? SIMPLE. SUBCONTRACT TO THE IRAQIS-- THEY'RE THE EXPERTS, AND THEY'RE CHEAP.



I'M BUYING A MANSION ON HILTON HEAD AND TAKING UP GOLF.

\$1.9 billion

"Restore Iraq Oil Services (Southern region)" to MARINE GUNNERY SGT. JED HENSEN

FINALLY, SOMEONE DESERVING WILL GET TO LAP AT THE GOLDEN NECTAR OF U.S. TAXPAYER MONEY CONVERTED INTO ILICIT PROFIT!



UM...GEORGE... postpsst

OH THANKS DICK.

ACTUALLY, WHEN I SAID, "SACRIFICED AND RISKED THEIR LIVES," I WAS REFERRING TO U.S. DEFENSE CONTRACTING CORPORATIONS. SORRY, FELLAS.

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Haiku Horoscope

ARIES

(Mar 21-Apr 19)
An amusing thing
Will happen to you this week
Football in the groin



LIBRA

(Sept 23 - Oct 22)
You will fall in love
This week; now, when I say "love"
I mean "a tar pit"



TAURUS

(Apr 20-May 20)
You will break your neck
In a vain attempt to turn
Your frown upside-down



SCORPIO

(Oct 23-Nov 21)
Don't get me started!
Let's just say Martians are the
Tip of the iceberg



GEMINI

(May 21-June 20)
If you want to do
Some serious thinking then
Do not get high first



SAGITTARIUS

(Nov 22-Dec 21)
You may now know that
Jenny is from the block but
You still do not care



CANCER

(June 21-July 22)
It is getting hot
In here; I think that you know
What needs to be done



CAPRICORN

(Dec 22-Jan 19)
Perhaps the best way
To control your thirst is through
An implanted chip



LEO

(July 23-Aug 22)
Have you ever seen
One of those "lucky cats"? No?
Well, they're watching you



AQUARIUS

(Jan 20-Feb 18)
It's a cold, dark world
And nothing is certain but
The fact that you die



VIRGO

(Aug 23-Sept 22)
Spice up your love life
Try paranoid delusions
Or tabasco sauce



PISCES

(Feb 19-Mar 20)
You will have a great
Week as long as you don't talk
To Aquarius



by Jonathan Ball. Registered Fraud, www.jonathanball.com



print culture

BY CHRISTOPHER WIEBE

A fine press

During holiday seasons, I venture, people are more susceptible to the beautiful, more appreciative of the traditional and time's passing, and less fretful about personal irrelevance. People light candles, undertake puzzles and peculiar baking; they do things that they might not otherwise do because they feel the deep-seated need to connect with who they once were or what has gone before.

These were my thoughts as I sat in the rare books room of the National Library looking through the window at the Ottawa River stumbling over the same Pre-Cambrian rocks it had the day before, and a millennia ago. On the table in front of me were little piles of exquisitely crafted books made by Jan and Crispin Elsted of the Barbarian Press in Mission, B.C. With a few encouraging shakes of the scallop-patterned paper slipcase, the deluxe edition of Theresa Kishkan's novella *Inishbream*, quarter-bound in dark green leather, settles cool and luxurious in the palm of my hand. I raise the cover and find Japanese endpapers, the half-title and title pages on watermarked Zerkall Silurian paper, and then under a wood engraving of a fishing boat on a rolling sea, the novella begins with a decorated initial. The construction of the book itself instills a mood of delight and "fineness" that enriches the experience of reading.

Flourishing under the surface of mainstream Canadian book publishing is the world of the private presses (sometimes called "fine presses"). They continue the craft of book making in the tradition of William Morris's Kelmscott Press, which in the 1880s and 1890s revived the arts of handprinting and old typefaces,

the use of fine paper and bindings. In Canada, fine press books gathered momentum in the late 1950s and 1960s with such initiatives as Hawkhead Press (printer of Margaret Atwood's first book, *Double Persephone*) and Coach House Press, and continue to flourish chiefly in Ontario and B.C. Produced in very small batches (typically 50 to 150 copies) and selling for more than \$100, these books find their way into rare book libraries and private collections.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Barbarian Press is acknowledged as one of the best private presses in the country, one of a very small number regularly producing books. They solicit manuscripts and design the books themselves, select the paper and typefaces, manually typeset each page and ink the forms for printing on mid-19th century hand presses. Barbarian has carved out a publishing niche of poetry in translation, illustrated editions of classics and collections of wood engravings. With a background in literary studies and writing rather than the graphic arts, the Elsteds emphasize that they make books to be read, not merely looked at. "Private press printing is a craft, not an art," they write. "The design and making of beautiful books is only secondarily a matter of self-expression; its first excellence is to serve the author and the reader."

Barbarian's first major publication was the collection of 12 "Albion Broadsheets" made between 1980 and '81. Particularly striking is the setting of the poem "No Leaf Stirs" by American poet Kenneth Rexroth. Its final stanza: "In the/ Blue dusk, widely space snowflakes/ Fall imperfect verticals./ Yet, under my porch,/ the thin, clear Autumn water/ Rustles softly like fine silk." This broadsheet helps me to appreciate the feedback circuit between form and text. The poem, printed in light violet ink and ornamented with a falling snowflake, rests in a pocket of white Japanese mulberry paper with a piece of Japanese lace paper (also incorporating a stylized snowflake pattern) slipped overtop. The interplay between tones of white and violet, the scrics and layers of textures and text, marvelously elaborate the poem.

As I look at Barbarian's publications, I realize the lack of expertise I bring to

these finely crafted books. This does not make them feel cold and alienating. Rather, they strangely impress on you a desire to know more about every aspect of their making. In Crispin Elsted's history of Barbarian's first decade, he points to the vexing problems posed by *Blue Roots of Japan*, a long poem by Robert Bringham published in 1986. A poem for two "interpenetrating" voices, the printing difficulty lay in how to differentiate these two streams that continuously weave in and about each other. A solution was found in combining one

voice printed in black ink with one "blind stamped" (impressed without ink). The effect, when I look at the small book now, is dazzling. The clearly inked voice is interrupted by ghostly words made immanent as one catches the page in the light.

A librarian at the National Library told me that the art of private press books are inherently traditional and conservative, compared with the wildly inventive work done on the "artist's books" created by visual artists (most of whom work in Quebec). Should this "conservatism" be

taken as something negative? I think not. Artist's books point to the genius of their creator, while fine press books refer away from themselves to the integrity of the traditional handwork processes by which they are made. This accounts for the "other-worldliness" one senses when one reads a fine press book. As a reader you are caught in the tension between the newness of the writing and the old way in which it is presented, a tension that allows you to feel the most intangible elements of human experience, the passage of time. ●

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Alex Morrison

Leaving Marx on the sidewalk

EAG skateboarding exhibit radically reinterprets urban spaces

By AMY FUNG

Growing up in suburban Edmonton in the late '80s and '90s, skateboarding was just that "thing" I was into for a while. Eventually, I had to give it up, because I just plain sucked. Back in those Sonic Youth years, beyond the wannabe skids like me who attempted to join the scene, skateboarding culture also began to attract a lot of media attention. But skateboarding aesthetics have never received their fair share of public interest.

Even though it feels like skaters have been persistently on the fringes of pop culture in more ways than cereal commercials and Avril Lavigne, not once have I ever heard skateboarding compared to performance art. Not once, that is, until the opening Saturday of the Edmonton Art Gallery's new exhibition, *Godzilla vs. Skateboarders: Skateboarding as a Critique of Social Spaces*. The skater stigma hasn't evolved all that much from its "hazard-to-pedestrians" label, but curator Anthony Kiendl's link between skateboarders and Godzilla, he assures, is a positive connection. Kiendl, the director of visual arts at the Banff Centre for the Arts, sees skateboarding as "a reassessment of the values of society as expressed through the reappropriation of social space." More specifically, he views it as the reappropriation of commercial spaces.

As an outsider looking in, I had to first understand that a skateboarder's mindset is to always see the possibilities in his or her urban landscape. Railings and curbs, for instance, transform into a infinite

number of creative possibilities for physical artistic expression. Skateboarding interprets space in a way that radically transforms the urban environment from its everyday utilitarian functions and, in so doing, deregulates the way we perceive and use our social landscape. Skate culture is a lot more than the media's surface image of baggy pants and Tony Hawk; skateboarding exists first and foremost as an artistic interpretation of city streets and urban landscapes.

SANDEE MOORE, the artist behind "The Mixer: the Ultimate Skateboarding Experience," which is currently at the EAG and will continue touring across Canada as a part of this exhibition, champions skateboarding as an artistic practice of everyday life. She cites the Situa-

view the everyday environment outside of the status quo is useful for critiquing or sidestepping hegemonic values," Moore says. "It should be noted, however, that skateboarding has its own status quo."

According to Plush Skateboards and Snowboards employee and self-described "wanted criminal" Nathan Matthews, Edmonton's skateboarding scene is one of the tightest he has ever been involved with and he fondly describes the closeness of the city's skate community. "Everyone knows each other and skates with each other," Matthews says, "and skaters in Edmonton have to be more creative because of the older architecture. We really have to make it happen for ourselves."

Moore, who has an MFA from the University of Regina and recently relocated to Winnipeg, notes the importance of engaging in a dialogue within your local community. She also talks about the commercial side of social space. "Big box stores have destroyed downtown," she says. "They promote anti-socialization and privilege the corporate over community." In this light, skateboarding becomes an act of resistance to urban decay, because skaters generally favour city streets over suburban skate parks that try to regulate skateboarding into designated spaces. As British architecture critic Iain Borden's says, "Here in the movement of the body across urban space, and in its direct interaction with the modern architecture of the city, lies the central critique of skateboarding—a rejection both of the values and of the spatio-temporal modes of living in the contemporary capitalist city."

SPACE DEFINES who we are and how we behave. It's so important that redefining urban culture is always a challenge. Many cities out-

ANALYSIS

tionists International, the Marxist avant-garde radicals led by Guy Debord in 1960s Paris, as a major influence on both her artwork and her involvement with skateboarding. She's particularly influenced by their slogan: "After the revolution, there will be no need for art." It means, Moore says, "that everyone would live their lives as art and every action would be viewed and carried out with the care and sense of worth as art-making."

"The Mixer" reflects her artistic statements by incorporating a multimedia and multi-sensorial experience of skateboarding as an introduction to the skateboarding community. Skating since the age of 16, Moore appreciates the physical and aural sensation of skateboarding and encapsulates its phenomenological experience, a nod to fellow exhibitor and Mexican artist Juan Carlos Perez Trejo. "Any activity that presents the opportunity to use or

SEE PAGE 12

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IN THE BOX

The Elephant and Castle on Whyte's

By DAVID YOUNG AND JOHN TURNER

John and Dave went to see The Lord of the Rings and have not been seen since, so replacement writers were called up from the minors. The last week of hockey for Kevin "Lord of the Stanley Cup Rings" Lowe's team was another disappointment, featuring two games and one point. The Oilers scored with 1.9 seconds left in regulation time to tie Minnesota 1-1 last Thursday and followed that up on Hockey Night in Canada with 3-0 loss to Vancouver.

Frodo: You know, after all I've been through, relaxing and watching a hockey game was the perfect antidote to my last few months of danger, trials and tribulations. I also had a chance to talk to OilMaster MacTavish, leader of the Oilers of Edmonton, and he's been going through the same troubles I experienced. I learned one thing from speaking to Mr. MacTavish: I had better odds facing orcs, ring wraiths, armies, mercenaries, Uruk-hai, the Balrog and Sauron's horrible eye and surviving than these Oilers will have on their quest to regain their Cup of Stanley.

Aragorn: To be a warrior, you must be strong, stout of heart and brave. You must be able to face any number of enemies. You must possess

courage and honour. And an effective power play wouldn't hurt, either. I've faced armies of thousands and vanquished foes against all odds. In my time I've killed scores of orcs. These Oilers can't even kill a penalty from what I've seen. And their enemy only outnumber them by one man. I have seen courage, though, with these Oilers. I'd go to battle any day with my steel side by side with the carbon fibre of the valiant Ethan Moreau. And Jason Smith has a very striking beard. What will help these warriors in their quest? Perhaps Gandalf has a spell or potion.

Gandalf: I have the knowledge and magic of thousands of years and, after watching this group at Rexall Place (a very regal-sounding name for a palace), I fear I have nothing that could aid this band of Oilmen. Although when I was queuing up to purchase a wonderful giant hand with a finger pointing skyward a fellow asked me to put a spell on the Oilers convincing them they are always down by one goal with two minutes left in the contest. Apparently the team is able to summon the strength they lack during the rest of the match in these pressure situations. Other than that, a wizard can only conjure so much magic.

Legolas: Magic is not needed. This group needs to spend years perfecting their skills of marksmanship. I gathered

early in the contest against their bitter rivals the Canucks of Vancouver that these Oilers cannot hit their enemies' nettings with any accuracy at all. Even a fledgling elf could outmatch any of these Oilers in a competition of accuracy. In fact, even a blindfolded elf would be the victor. If their pucks were arrows, opposing armies wouldn't require armour or shields. They could rush in unafraid of the arrow's fatal sting. Their only fear would be mighty Georges Laraque, a monster of a man. He reminds me of my new ally, Gimli the Dwarf, but much larger.

Gimli: Aye, Laraque is a solid and fierce warrior. If we could fit him into our tunnels, he'd be at home with the dwarves deep underground. In fact, he probably would be in his element. A man beside me mentioned Laraque has hands of stone. Obviously he is comfortable with mountains and rocks.

Frodo: I had a fright during the contest when this creature they called a Sogel entered the field of battle. With his scowl and wild hair, I feared an orc had escaped into this Rexall Palace. I was relieved to discover he was just a man. One man I identify with right now is Mike of Comrie, son of Bill, heir to the Brick House. I read of Mike's adventures before I sat down to watch the contest. Comrie, like I, Frodo Baggins, felt he had to leave his comfortable shire for a strange, far-off land. He probably has no idea what dangers await him, but he is embarking anyway. Plus, he is small of stature just like a hobbit. I hear tales of fierce giants in the east. I hope Mr. Hitched-Cock will protect and guide him, just as the wise Gandalf has watched over me. Good luck, Mike of Comrie. ●

\$3 Bill

Continued from page 4

New York and Rolling Stone. That openness has made Wainwright a media darling. He can do wrong, so to speak—unlike rehab veteran Liza Minnelli (with whom Rufus recently had dinner). The press had a field day over Liza when her husband David Gest filed for divorce. "I was actually walking down the street [the day the story broke]," Wainwright says, "when this complete and utter stranger held the New York Post—which of course had Liza and David on the cover—in front of me and started laughing! I think he who lives by the pen dies by the pen."

"I think it's possible I would sell more albums and be more famous if I wasn't gay."

But if I had to deal with that cover-up, I wouldn't have been able to handle it emotionally."

Which is why, in a celebrity-obsessed era when being gay is still scandalous, Wainwright made sure he was out from day one. "My first stipulation to Dreamworks when I went in [to sign my record contract] was, 'No, I'm not covering this up,'" he explains. "I think it's possible I would sell more albums and be more famous if I wasn't gay. But if I had to deal with that cover-up, I wouldn't have been able to handle it emotionally."

Wainwright is cross-promoting his fab new album *Want One* on his current tour. The recording sessions featured such luminaries as Levon Helm, Charlie Sexton and Wainwright's mother Kate McGarrigle. As for his favourite song,

he says, "I love all my children, but the ones that get less attention, I love them more. I love '14th Street' [because it's] a song about personal triumph."

He could just as easily be talking about his descent into crystal meth hell. "I'd been drinking for years," Wainwright says, "but certainly what brought the curtain down was the crystal meth. I'd go on these three- or four-day binges. So I checked myself into rehab. I had a lot of help. I consulted other performers who'd been through the same experience and the general consensus was, yes, I should put everything on hold. I was very fortunate.... I don't want to be judgmental, but I do feel there's a certain amount of denial that for all of the fun of these drugs

there is a price to be paid. Some people can manage it but I just couldn't. Unfortunately, those who can be lionized and olympified in gay culture—those who can take the most drugs, stay up the latest and still have a great body and have 45,000 affairs. I just can't do that. I don't have the stamina."

As always, I ask Wainwright whether he's found Prince Charming, and as always I get the same answer. "No, I haven't," he sighs. "Not yet. It's coming down to the wire. I still totally believe in love. I want the pinnacle of my life to be on those terms—not about partying. I may be foolish, but I still want that." ●

Skater culture

Continued from page 10

law skateboarding on city streets altogether, but Edmonton skateboarders are free to ride on all public streets except Jasper Avenue and Whyte Avenue. According to lapsed traffic-by-laws, skateboarding was grouped under the same heading as "sledding" and it wasn't until March of 2001 that the city finally recognized skateboards as a legitimate mode of transportation.

Krista Koluch, president of the Edmonton Skateboard Club, is frustrated by the situation here but thinks Edmonton is quite tolerant of skateboarding when compared to most cities. "Skateboarding is still illegal in Vancouver if you're riding down the sidewalk," she says, "but they obviously lead the pack when it comes to public skateboard parks. They also receive a lot of exposure because they have an international

skateboard competition there every year, so we'll never catch up to them in that respect." But Koluch does concede that "more can always be done to bridge the gap between skateboarders and the majority of society. The problem is that skateboarders are rebellious by nature and sometimes it hurts us when it comes to our image."

Founded in 1996, the ESC has been working hard to build a bridge between the skateboarding community and the city by bringing awareness of the other to both sides. Currently, the ESC hopes to build a central public skateboard park to attract people back to downtown, but since skateboarding is outlawed on Jasper Ave, obstacles still lie in their way. That said, with one look at our vacuous downtown core, you'd think walking had been outlawed as well.

The image of Godzilla stomping through the city is suppose to be analogous to skateboarders grinding through the city. But would Godzilla have had the same affect if there were no screaming Japanese people pointing up to him in the streets? A spectacle needs a crowd. And cities, including Edmonton, need to open their eyes to the cultural attributes of skateboarding as an indicator of artistic inspiration. ●

Godzilla vs. Skateboarders: Skateboarding as a Critique of Social Spaces runs at the Edmonton Art Gallery until February 22. For more information go to www.edmontonartgallery.com.

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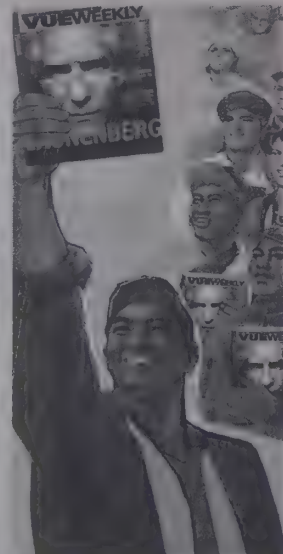
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5506 Tudor Glen (St. Albert) • 460-2222

The smell of sea-dwelling lifeforms fills the air, and the East Coast music in the background makes me feel as though I've been suddenly transported to the Rock. I'm searching for the words to describe the dining area, a compact section featuring artistic depictions of fish and unsurprisingly, lighthouses. Then it hits me: "rustic oceanic atmosphere." (Okay, so that's what it says on the menu. So sue me.) Speaking of menus, I'm loving the Lighthouse's lunch edition. The level of sophistication is greater than I'd anticipated, what with the red Peruvian trout and Cajun prawn pizza. And the dinner menu is even more in-depth, featuring a list of stuff that makes my mouth water—paella, Hawaiian bigeye tuna, bouillabaisse and California striped bass with a mandarin fennel glaze. Very nice. And the wine list seems reasonably priced, too—I see a bottle of Australian Rosemount shiraz-cabernet is \$23 and I know the same bottle will run you about \$14 or so in the liquor store, so Billingsgate obviously isn't going crazy with the markup. Being the soup junkie that I am, I start off with a small bowl of lobster bisque. The lovely orange mixture is described as having been prepared in the traditional French style, with cognac, cream and rich lobster broth. Topped with some finely chopped fresh parsley, it's incredibly flavourful. Rich yes, but it doesn't weigh me down at all, which is good because I have a pickered fillet on the way. (Note: you can get a bigger portion of the bisque as a

meal. I saw one come out of the kitchen. Huge.) "That's a good choice," the server tells me as I order the fish, prepared in a tangerine butter and served with green apple relish. The large, colourful plate features the northern Alberta pickerel, a side of rice and a medley of vegetables. Not just your cheap, run-of-the-mill veggies, either, but a mix of red pepper, snow peas, zucchini, cauliflower, broccoli, carrots and squash. The pickerel is good and tender, the white meat flaking apart as you gently prod it with the fork. I'm missing something, though. And unfortunately, it doesn't dawn on me until later that there was no green apple relish on the side. Damn. It would've tasted great with the pickerel... which is probably why it appears on the menu in the first place, right? Still, I douse the fish with some lemon and it's just fine. **Average Price: \$\$\$** (Reviewed 11/13/03)

THE BLUE NILE ETHIOPIAN CUISINE

10875-98 St. • 428-5139

As I walk up to the front door of the Blue Nile, I feel like I'm entering someone's home. Colourful flowers line the walkway and the tiny patio out front is like the stoop of a house. Blue Nile's menu has just 10 items (none of them costing more than over \$10) so it's easy to make a decision and feel good about it. I consider the doro wat, a traditional Ethiopian chicken stew, and the rito, very rare chopped beef with spiced butter, mitmita (a special red pepper sauce) and homemade cottage cheese, but the combo platter makes the most sense since it offers a wide assortment of dishes to explore. There's a beef dish (named either kray wat or alicha wat, and I'm afraid I'm not sure which), shiro wat (a ground pea mash with onions, tomatoes and green peppers), tikel gomen (cabbage, potato and carrots simmered in a mild sauce with ginger, garlic, onion and green pepper), yeabesha gomen (steamed spinach) and a small portion of the Blue Nile house salad. We also

ordered some ye bag wat, lamb braised in the common red pepper sauce. Everything is placed in a mesob, a large woven basket that partitions all the items into small servings. The bottom of the mesob is lined with injera and the food is carefully placed atop it. Our server brings the lamb out in a separate bowl and spoons it into the centre of the basket, creating a layout that resembles an artist's palette. Just as colourful, too. The ye bag wat is especially tasty, with a fiery kick that doesn't overpower. We also really like the ground pea, which looks like a glob of yellow humus, and the steamed spinach, which reminds me of how my mother would cook greens like Swiss chard—it's bitter but very tender and nicely complemented by the pieces of injera. **Average Price: \$\$\$** (Reviewed 09/25/03)

LEMONGRASS CAFÉ

10417-51 Ave. • 413-0088

I was driving around aimlessly for a good hour, spotting nothing but "CLOSED" signs, before pulling up to the Lemongrass Café, a tasteful little Vietnamese place. Thankfully, it was open—the better half in the passenger seat gets awful grumpy when she's real hungry. We were seated in a deuce up against the camel-coloured walls and dove right into the menus. I considered choosing something from the interesting drink menu, be it a green tea-laced martini or a Nhau vo sake Caesar but we didn't have the time. Need food—now. Kate and I figured we'd pick one main dish each, while I made the executive decision to start with some spicy kimchee and a special Southwestern Vietnamese noodle soup. Our capable waiter laid down the dishes—a plate of lemon chicken and a neat-looking vegetarian option, tofu with mango and apple in a spicy red curry. Oh, and some perfectly cooked fluffy rice. The crispy pieces of chicken were topped with a sweet, lemony glaze. Nothing fancy, but it sure hit the spot. And I really



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CHRIS VANISH at 426-1996**

Life of paella

First you get the saffron, then you get the wine, then you...

By DAVID DICENZO

Crunch time was arriving soon. Less than a week remained before Christmas and there were many presents still to buy, but I just wasn't up to facing the rabid shopping crowds. Instead, I opted to face the equally frenzied grocery shoppers in order to make a memorable dinner.

For some reason, Spain was on my mind. Spanish soccer—a lovely brand of game—had recently debuted on a Canadian sports channel and just a few days prior a friend was explaining to some fellow partygoers the difference between Spaniards and those of Catalan descent and precisely why those two groups despise each other (it's not pretty). While I digested the cultural differences, I started thinking about food.

Paella to be exact.

PAELLA IS LIKE a casserole—everyone has his or her own recipe. There are no real steadfast rules for what the paella should contain, just variations based on personal preference. I wanted a special seafood mix for mine and after a trip to Billingsgate for shrimp, mussels, Digby scallops and calamari, I had to make another brief stop for some produce. And saffron. Obtaining the pricey spice proved harder than I'd imagined and before long I was on an unexpected quest that I was hardly prepared for. Save-On? No dice. Chinese Superstore? Don't carry it.

I was beginning to feel like a needed a frickin' hobbit with me to complete this journey. Finally my luck changed at Planet Organic and I dished out about nine bucks for a

small vile of the stringy, red gold. Between the seafood and saffron, I was already in for a good chunk of change and matters were made worse when I bought a bottle of Spanish wine and got a hard time from the female drill sergeant at the counter.

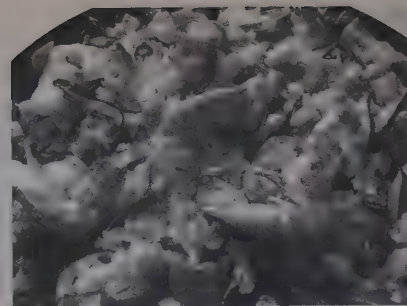
"Can you leave your bags at the front, sir?" was her request. Yeah, like I'm gonna jam a 12-pack into my plastic bag filled with parsley and a baguette.

When I go to pay for my bottle of Sangre de Toro (blood of the

COOKING

bull, if I'm not mistaken) she takes the bill I hand her and passes it under a machine that spot fakes. "I'm sorry sir, I can't accept this. It's glowing too much, sir." Glowing? I explain to her that I'm not up on today's counterfeiting-prevention technology. And by the way, stop calling me "sir."

EVENTUALLY I MADE IT HOME and started to cook. In my largest pan, I began to sweat some chopped sweet onions and garlic on low to medium heat. I tossed in half a red pepper and half a green pepper, each chopped into small pieces and left them to get going, seasoning with each step. I used about a cup or so of chicken broth and then added the beautiful saffron, which eventually produces an incredibly vibrant yellow colour. The next step was to throw in the rice—something I could have done before putting the broth in but either way works—and carefully add the seafood. I had also bought a piece of red snapper so I cut that into four smallish chunks and gently



placed them around the pan, along with the shrimp, scallops, a bit of crushed tomato and a handful of chopped parsley. I turned the element to low, covered the pan and let the whole thing simmer for a while. About a half hour into the process, I topped it up with the calamari rings and mussels, two items that don't take all that long to cook. When the mussels began to open (save for a few that refused), I uncovered it to cook off some of the excess liquid in the pan.

It was at about that time that the woman came through the front door, surprised by the fantastic smells coming out of the kitchen. One small miscalculation on my part was using just a bit too much of the crushed tomatoes. The dish was redder in appearance than I had imagined, drowning out that yellow from the saffron. But the taste was top notch.

The rice had absorbed an awful lot of flavour and the fish/seafood was incredibly tender having cooked slowly atop the stove for a good 35 to 40 minutes or so.

"It was supposed to be paella but it's a little more of a jambalaya now," I joked.

I spooned out a couple bowls of the feast, topped it with a slice of lemon and some more fresh parsley, then cracked the wine, broke the bread and we were off.

I'm thinking that if you're hosting a little New Year's Eve soiree, a nice paella dinner might just be the perfect way to wrap up 2003. Olé!

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loved the vegetarian dish. The tofu still had some texture to it despite swimming in the lovely, rich curry. It included a few different types of apple chunks, though I didn't find much mango in it—just a little bite every now and then. I'm assuming the sweetness of the fruit was designed to counteract the fire of the curry and it all worked wonderfully together. (It was just fantastic spooned over the rice.) Our dessert, chocolate and pecan spring rolls, arrived atop a white, shell-shaped plate with three balls of lichee, a small dollop of whipped cream with a mint leaf and a tiny bowl of ginger coconut caramel glaze for dipping. This was a small masterpiece. I'd never seen a dessert like it and the taste was incredible—rich chocolate, melded with the pecans and paper-thin layers of the crispy spring roll, still hot. **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 08/28/03)

LIVA

11053-86 Ave • 433-LEVA

As soon as I walk into Leva, my eyes lock on the impressive-looking Sicilian cannolis behind the counter—I haven't seen old-school pastries like that in a long, long time. I instantly decide that after a relaxing, late afternoon bite, I'll be trying one. The main menu items are things like homemade thin-crust pizzas and *tramezzinis*, which are grilled sandwiches. But I notice some unique items too, like the *biscottis*—lemon pistachio or anise-flavoured. Very cool. There's also a nice array of imported beers and Italian wines, like the Nipozano Chianti, a fantastic choice I've enjoyed on a few occasions. I go with the chicken pesto *tramezzini* and ask for a side of green bean salad. Antonio, the guy who seems to run the joint, tells me they're out, so I go for the potato salad. He says I'll like it. The *tramezzini* is incredible and I'll tell you why: I've had the chicken and pesto combo at other places and usually it's chicken loaf that comes with it. Not at Leva. Real, tender chicken breast, sliced thinly, combined with a tasty pesto and cheese. (I believe Antonio said it was Edam.) And the perfectly spherical

scoop of potato salad is excellent—Antonio has left the skin on the potatoes, which I like, and he's mixed in a few artichokes too. He's also finished it all off with a drizzle of olive oil and some grated cheese on top. **Average Price: \$** (Reviewed 10/02/03)

MILL CREEK CAFÉ

9562-82 Ave • 439-5535

Other than a bevy of nice-looking sweets and baked goods, sandwiches are pretty much the order of the day at Mill Creek Café. Kate orders the Montreal smoked meat sandwich, while I eventually get around to choosing the salmon salad. Then come the questions. "Swiss, cheddar or cream cheese?" the counter girl asks. Kate says Swiss, I say cream. "Tomato, cucumber and sprouts?" Yup. "Pickles?" Sure. "Hot, honey or Dijon mustard?" Kate says yes to the former and after a bit of deliberation, I pass, figuring there's no need to add mustard to the salmon. "Mayo and butter?" Neither. Mill Creek bakes everything fresh each day and as I attempt to wrap my mouth around the massive slices of grainy whole wheat bread with pieces of carrot in it, I think to myself that it looks awfully inviting. I had taken note of the fact that Kate asked for hot mustard and I patiently awaited her reaction. Sure enough, it came. "Whoa," she says after the first or second bite. It's actually really hot stuff—I try a nibble and some of the mustard actually burns a small nick on my lip. These sandwiches are huge and because baked goods are in our immediate future, we pack up the remainders and head back to the counter. This time, I'm only slightly more decisive—a piece of chocolate cherry loaf (a mere buck and change) and a slice of lemon meringue pie, though the chocolate peanut butter bars were crying out at me. **Average Price: \$** (Reviewed 12/04/03)

PAT 'N MIKE'S FAMILY RESTAURANT

17732-102 Ave (Westgate Business Park) • 484-7673

However long it's been since Pat 'n' Mike's got started, I figure not much has changed. And that's good. As I sit at the diner-style counter in my spa-

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DISH WEEKLY

cious, swiveling double seat, I gaze around the noisy room and find all sorts of cool stuff. There's a rack filled with those mini-boxes of cereal and nearby is a couple of pies awaiting their call to duty. I smile when I see the circular, revolving chit-holder that the open kitchen utilizes for new orders from the "veteran" waitstaff. And Mike himself is making the rounds, keeping an eye on things during the controlled chaos of the lunch rush. I decide on the cutlet sandwich with some fries and coleslaw on the side. Almost everything that I see coming out of the kitchen has gravy on it so I join in and get a scoop for the fries. Now, I'm not going to pretend that my sandwich is one of the best things I've ever ingested—it was zapped in the deep fryer just a little too long for my liking—but for \$5.75, I didn't really expect the world. I was eagerly anticipating the "special sauce" but can't help but crack another smile when I find relish and mayo on my bun. The chunky slaw is pretty good, though. The two pies available for dessert are pineapple coconut cream and an apple crumble. I choose the latter, which costs me a mere toonie—half a buck more to have it à la mode. How sweet is that? The piece of apple crumble is huge, so I'm guessing Mike doesn't make all his profit from the pie counter. **Average Price: \$** (Reviewed 06/26/03)

RICKY'S ALL DAY GRILL

10140-109 St • 421-7546

Ricky's—a western Canadian chain with a ton of outlets throughout B.C.,

Alberta and (I believe) Saskatchewan—serves a bevy of diner staples like liver and onions, Salisbury steak, burgers and sandwiches, but there are almost two full pages of brekkie food on the menu as well, and the cool thing is it's all available any time of the day. It's definitely a boon to the hungry diner, even if it throws a mighty big wrench into the selection process. Coffee cups are already on the tables (turned upside-down no less), and the seating consists mostly of booths. You half-expect Linda Lavin to walk up to take your order, but the Ricky's inner belly is new and clean, not beat-up and dingy like Mel's. It's like a new pair of glimmering white kicks—you need to scuff them up a bit... you know, work 'em in. They even offer shakes, so I order a chocolate one, the first time I've done so in a restaurant in years and years. The triple chorizo Benny was absolutely gargantuan, with three eggs and a mountain of home fries piled onto an extra-large red plate (heated, good for keeping the breakfast contents warm). **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 05/29/03)

SCHÄNK'S ATHLETIC CLUB

9927-178 St • 444-2125

"The thing I love about Schänks," my friend Steve says, "is that other than the track, there's not a bigger cavalcade of problem gamblers anywhere." How prophetic. Just as we sit down in front of one of the many massive TV screens with the game on (they have the sound up for the NFL tilt as opposed to the CFL playoff game, which in a way is too bad), I can't help but notice the freakshow going on one table over. The guy in question is wearing a leather tricoloured Miami Dolphins hat, his dirty jeans are wide open and his ample gut is hanging out, and in between nervously sipping coffee, hauling on cigarettes and choosing plays on his QB1 machine, he appears to be rubbing himself down, head included, with a bottle of Absorbine Jr. But I'm more chuffed about the meager order of hot, boneless wings that we start out with. Nine bucks and there's nothing more than a handful of overdone, deep-fried chicken chunks with some hot sauce and a side of

ranch. Luckily, one my superstars has already scored a touchdown so I'm in a good mood, just like the hardcore Canadian fans celebrating Saskatchewan's route of Winnipeg. The quality slightly improves with the next round of eats. I go with the pepper-corn Jack burger, while Steve tries the spolumbo submarine sandwich. I haven't had a burger in a while, so it's a treat to sink into the big patty, which was seasoned with—get this—"course" pepper and a Jack Daniels barbecue sauce. I wonder for a second if the type was on purpose. Nah. My mixed greens on the side have about as much spring as the Blue Bombers offence, but the crispy order of kettle chips makes up for it. The homemade chips are nice and hot, served with a bowl of a real spicy onion, cream cheese dip. It's definitely the "play of the day" in this highlight package. **Average Price: \$** (Reviewed 11/06/03)

SMOKEY JOE'S HICKORY

SMOKEHOUSE

15135 Stony Plain Road • 413-3379

I figure—er, I mean, I reckon—Smokey Joe's was conceived as a replica of old-fashioned prairie cuisine, or at least an homage to it. License plates from all over the continent dot the walls and the menu, bound in wood, has headings like "Samwiches" and "Young Un's Dinners." The ranch theme is a little schmaltzy but for a guy soon to vacate the province, it's enough to bring a small tear to my eye. The coolest thing has to be the pink butcher paper they use for tablecloths—that's a nice touch. My comedic dining buddy Steve is along for this trail ride and he busts a gut when he spots the veggieburger on the menu. "I bet you it's never been ordered," he says. Well, neither of us are gonna be the first so instead, we put all our eggs in one high-cholesterol basket: the sampler for two. It includes, in no particular order, two roasted quarter chickens, pork ribs, turkey, ham, beef and two of Smokey Joe's famous ultra-hot wings. Oh, and garlic toast. "We're out of wings tonight so I'll give you another quarter chicken. Is that okay?" our host asks. Deal! You get your choice of three sides with the sampler so Steve and I



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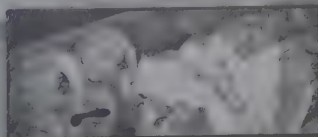
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agree on cornbread, beans and potato salad. I don't notice much green anywhere in the restaurant so we see no sense in having any on our plate. Back a century ago, a cowboy wouldn't have been clamouring for a side salad, right? I swear there's a strained look on our server's face as she lugs out the plate with what Steve refers to as "a pile of meat" on it. "There, go wild," she says. All of the homemade barbecue sauces are lined up in front of us—Smokey Joe's sells them on the premises, along a variety of the meats, including jerky—and it's time to get to work. On this snowy, frigid night, the platter gives me a much-needed dose of summertime. The spicy taste of the smoked meats, the richness of the beans and the creamy potato salad make me forget that it got dark at 4:30 p.m. that day. **Average Price: \$\$\$** (Reviewed 12/11/03)

TERRY VAUGHN'S SPORTS LOUNGE

10136-100 St (The MacLeod) • 428-3399

If you know anything about stalwart Eskimo wide receiver Terry Vaughn, then you know he's a class act who always looks good on the football field. It's no surprise, then, that the establishment that bears his name should have the same characteristics. The space is big (okay, that's where the similarity to TV ends) and bold, with stained wood chairs/accents, a beautiful long bar, comfy leather couches and a super-high ceiling left over from the bank that was housed in the space some 20 years ago. I'm starving when we walk through the door and in time, a healthy serving (in quantity, not cholesterol) of hickory smoked chicken dip is placed in front of us. The rich portion of dip—a tasty combo of jack cheese and tender chunks of chicken topped with melted cheddar—is pretty large. Served with fresh tricoloured corn chips and salsa, it's a great starter. I know it will fill us up but I can't stop dunking the chips until every last bit of the concoction is scraped from the sides of the bowl.

We split a house salad, a standard mix of greens and veggies, but the tangy mango vinaigrette we chose sets it apart from similar items on most menus. Even though the dip has bird in it, the slow-roasted jerk chicken with rice and beans jumps off the page at me. One problem: no beans in the rice. Oh well. The chicken is incredibly tender and man, the jerk coating hits me harder than Terry's teammate Singor Mobley in the open field. This was serious heat. I really like the dish, but for a few shaky moments, I feel like I'm in a sauna. Our server, a friendly lass from Nova Scotia, recommends the cheesecake for dessert and we like the

sound of a strawberry and chocolate combo for topping. Really good stuff and nicely presented, with a few fresh mint leaves on the side. We're filled up big time by this point and ready to get outta Dodge. The tab comes and I'm fairly impressed that we've only racked up a bill of about \$60, despite what seemed like a substantial amount of food and drink. **Average price: \$\$\$** (Reviewed 08/14/03)

TROPIKA MALAYSIAN CUISINE

6004-104 St • 439-6699

As we meet up in the front entrance of Tropika and I'm amazed by how packed it is this jumping Friday night. I've been here before and I loved it—but that visit was quite some time ago. Years, in fact, and it seems Tropika's gotten a lot more popular since then. And why not? With the straw awning over the bar, the big woven chairs reserved for VIPs and the Hawaiian shirts on the waitstaff, it's like island party central in here. Before we even look at the tantalizing food menu, we giggle at the depth and variety of the drink list. Doctor Funk (and Doctor Funk's Sun, made with 151 rum), Bellini, Scorpion—they all look good. Birthday boy John finds his groove when he orders a Tropikolada, a drink that apparently comes from heaven. "You couldn't come up with anything that would make me happier," John says after slurping up the last bit of what one table member calls "an Orange Julius with alcohol." I figure food will make us even happier. Right out of the gate, we try some starters: a dozen satays (pork, beef, chicken and lamb), five Indonesian spring rolls and two bowls of Singapore Laska, a hearty soup with vermicelli noodles. The crunchy peanut sauce goes well with the satays and the spring rolls are incredibly neat, stuffed with pan-fried pork, Chinese mushrooms and shredded jicama, then deep-fried extra-crispy with peanuts on the outer shell. The Singapore Laska is a feast with shrimp, tofu and fish cakes all married together in a tasty broth. My favourite, however, is the Kari Lembu, a sensational dish of melt-in-your-mouth curry with beef. We also ordered something known as Nasi Goreng, a local recipe of Malay fried rice and a few delectable side dishes, including steamed spinach and Sambal Bunchies, firm green beans with prawns and Sambal sauce. While each of these creations rocks (very spicy stuff), the most memorable item is the Sayur Lemak hot pot, which comes to the table in a small kettle filled with vegetables and prawns simmered in a Malay coconut sauce. Oh, it was awesome, the broth so rich and colourful—by far the pièce de résistance. **Average Price: \$\$** (Reviewed 10/09/03)

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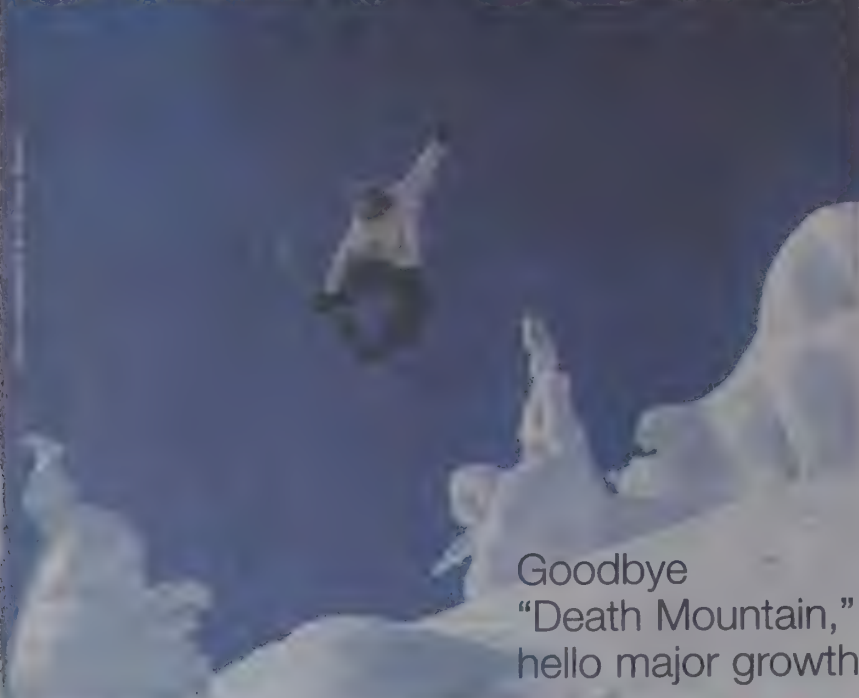


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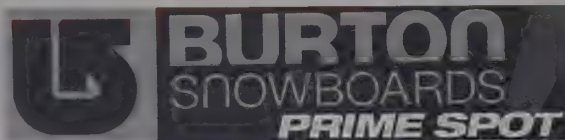
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Sun Peaks



Goodbye
"Death Mountain,"
hello major growth



By STEWART DUNCAN

How does a ski hill go from a few rustic buildings in 1992 to one of the finest ski resorts in Canada in a decade? Easy—great terrain, excellent snow conditions, mild winters and \$300 million. And there you have it: Sun Peaks near Kamloops, B.C.

Looking down from any vantage point at Sun Peaks Village, it's hard to imagine that almost all these hotels, houses and condos have sprung up since Nippon Cable bought the underdeveloped ski hill known locally as Tod Mountain. The name was one of the first things to change, mostly for the sake of the German market because in the Teutonic tongue "tod" apparently means death.

Wrong image, wrong message.

It appears that all the marketing efforts are paying off. Sun Peaks has seen huge growth in the number of skier visits. In just the last five ski seasons, from 1998/99 to 2002/03, the number of skiers and boarders rose from 163,000 to 285,000 with another impressive increase expected this year. It's good news for the resort, but the better news for the average skier or boarder is that the resort is far from capacity and new terrain is still being developed.

Sun Peaks has three mountains,

including Sundance Ridge, which is primarily intermediate runs, Tod Mountain, which holds the main and most challenging areas, and Mt. Morrisey, which just fully opened last year and is the only north-facing hill. More runs will open as village and residential development continues, which it will as long as there's a market. So far, it's getting hotter rather than cooling. It confirms the original vision of the planners and, more importantly, the investors. Even after Nippon Cable poured more than \$11 million into infrastructure to get the resort started, there was very little to show for it above ground.

"TO DATE, Nippon Cable has invested more than \$75 million in Sun Peaks," says Sun Peaks marketing manager Francis Argouin. "Total investment at this point from all involved is \$300 million. That puts us in the top four or five in Canada in investment dollars."

Much of that has gone into real-estate development as builders erect one expansive townhouse or condominium project after another and sell them in short order. More and more luxury houses are bursting out of the woods as well, many of them avid skiers from greater Vancouver and Seattle, Washington, who are priced out of Whistler's million-dollar properties.

All the real-estate growth means

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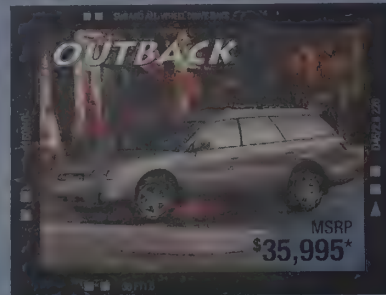
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BY HART GOLBECK

Wear and care

Although it's still unseasonably warm out there, you know it's about to drop into a deep freeze. And when it does, it's important that you chose the right clothing for skiing and boarding. You don't want a little frost to slow you down, do you? Remember to layer up. To do this properly, you need three layers: wicking, insulating and protection. Wicking layers are usually a synthetic material and the labels are commonly marked "wicking." The insulation layer is commonly made from fleece or wool and, finally, the exterior protection layers are waterproof jackets and pants made from materials like nylon and Gortex. A hat is extremely important because up to 60 per cent of your body's heat can escape through the noggin. A big no-no is cotton—and that includes jeans, socks and T-shirts. Cotton absorbs moisture and that could make for a cold day on the slopes once the materials get wet and the cold temperatures start to seep in.

Hell of a day for Guay

Spruce Grove's Jennifer Heil continues to shred the moguls upon returning to the World Cup circuit after a year off to heal her mind and body. After capturing a silver medal two weeks ago in Finland she took gold last weekend in Italy. Many experts who questioned her decision to take a year off are bewildered at her incredibly speedy return to form. Canadians did, however, suffer some bad news on the World Cup circuit when promising downhiller Erik Guay tore up his knee during a training run at Val Gardena, Italy. You hate to blame race organizers, but on 1-day (injury day) Erik was the first skier down the slope and he lost it and crashed on an uneven area that race officials smoothed off before the race was restarted. Unfortunately, Guay is expected to miss the rest of the season, which is a shame after his incredible second-place finish this year at Lake Louise.

Heady skis

Head skis have installed an "intelli-fibers" and microchip system in their M75 and C300 models. Mechanical energy is transformed into electricity and amplified, which in turn reduces vibration and stabilizes the ski. This is their claim and I'm only the messenger, but maybe they could install GPS and motion control as well, which could notify the ski patrol whenever there's a crash. ☺

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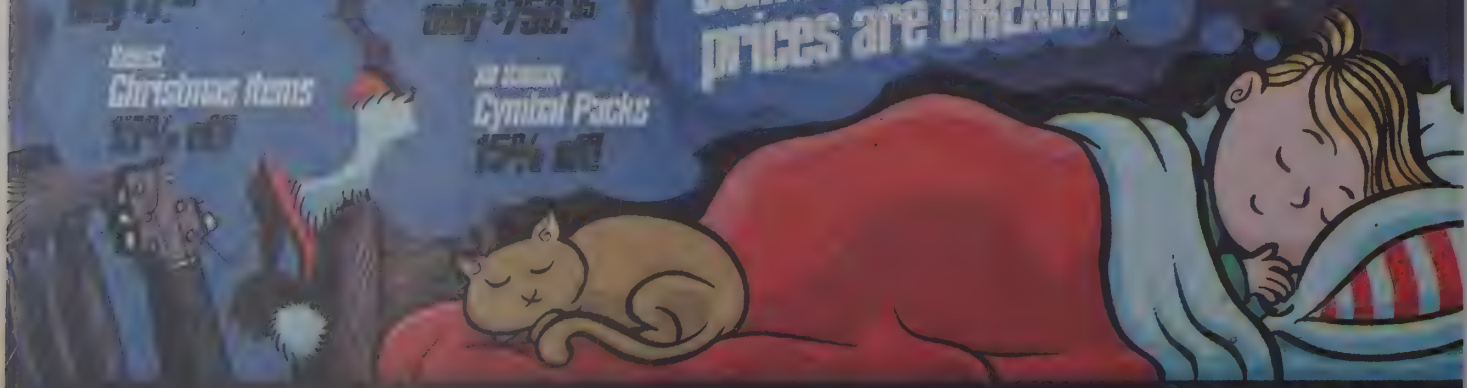
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Child in charge

What if schools didn't tell kids what to study?

By NICOLETTE GROENEVELD

Most people coming out of the traditional school system have heard the all-too-common phrase that today's education system is "preparing children for life." Let's reflect on that for a moment.

First, if we are preparing children for life, and doing so between the ages of, say, five through 18, does that imply that life only begins at age 18? Joseph Chilton Pearce, a noted author and public speaker, says, "The first thing I would say about any true educational system is that it is not

founded on the notion that we are preparing a child for life.... The idea that we're going to train a child at seven to get a good job at age 27 is a travesty of profound dimension.

What if we adults were forced to spend all our adult years in "adult school" in the name of "preparing us for our retirement"? How ridiculous would that be? We would say, "Hey, I'll put some money in an RSP, but leave me alone! I've got a life to live now!" Yet we force our children to sit in desks for 12 years and tell them, "Cheer up. It's so you can have a good life later."

We take children out of the present, focus them on the future and what do they learn? Is it possible that at some level they learn to discount their childhood—that their childhood is not important, that it's more or less just a necessary phase

they go through? How many children have we heard say, "I can't wait till I grow up!"

An even greater tragedy in "preparing children for life" is that the whole concept of the present moment is lost. Anyone who has read Eckhart Tolle's book *The Power Of Now* knows true living happens

ALTERNATIVES

only in the present moment. In observing young children, we see that they are locked in the present moment. They don't worry about tomorrow or next week; right now is all that matters. Along comes conditioning, magnified a thousandfold by schooling, and our once-present children spend the rest of their lives trying to re-master the moment-to-

moment living that was once natural to them.

SECONDLY, if we are preparing children for life, does that mean children somehow have to be "gotten ready" to live? Promoting this notion gives the message that children are not enough as they are but need to become something in order to be okay. The idea that children are born with all the natural instincts and drives they need to propel them towards functional adulthood is negated. Children are seen as incomplete beings who need to be "done to" and "done for" by outside forces rather than being trusted already to possess all the qualities they will need to become functional adults.

Anyone who interacts with children can tell you that, provided their original sense of being powerful is

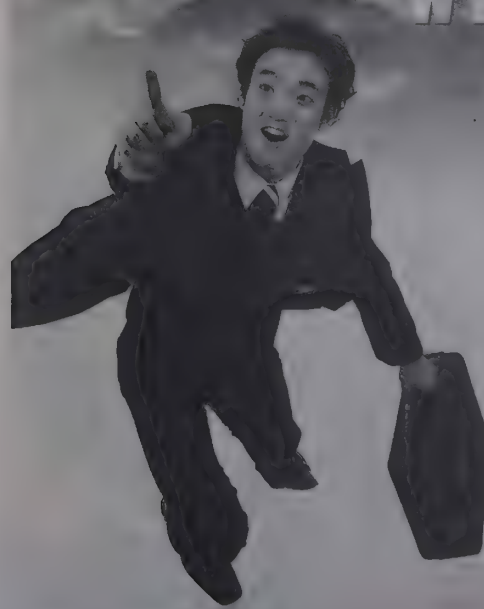
not damaged, children are highly functional just as they are. They are naturally capable problem-solvers, honest and skilled communicators and brilliant, creative thinkers. They are also highly self-motivated, adventurous and fully desirous of learning, challenging themselves and stretching into more of what they can be.

The school system doesn't seem to believe this. It tells children they aren't enough and had better acquire all the government's prescribed knowledge and skills so they can "be something" when they grow up. Children are pressured to figure out as early as possible what that "something" will be. This creates "not good enough" feelings in children and they begin to fear the future, because if they don't succeed at gaining

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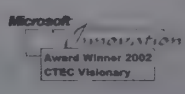
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Alternative Education

Continued from previous page

whatever knowledge and skills are prescribed, and if they don't figure out what they want to "be," they'll be lost as adults and not be able to "live." School and learning thus become a matter of survival rather than a joyful means for discovering the world.

Joseph Chilton Pearce says that in a true educational system, "We don't prepare for life, we equip children with the means to live fully at whatever stage they are in." This kind of education eliminates the emphasis on the future and allows children to live fully in every moment. Children maintain their natural ability to live in the "now" and they are free to enjoy themselves and their world exactly as they are.

FINALLY, if we are preparing children for life, does that mean that we, the adults who are doing the preparing, know absolutely what's best for each child and know what each child needs to be successful in his/her adult life? That idea is, in my opinion, arrogant. Who are we to believe that we know what's best for every child? And how is it that the government officials who prescribe the curriculum presume to know what each child will need in order to fulfill his/her life purpose?

Returning to my "adult school" example, if some government official were to decide what I need for my retirement, part of my curriculum

might be to learn to play golf, drive a motorhome and swallow medications. Ridiculous. That's not a direction I see my life taking, not to mention that those are things I'm not at all interested in learning. Yet we prescribe a blanket curriculum for children, tell them it's good for them and tell them that even if they're not interested in X, X and X, they may be "some day" and, besides, those subjects "will prepare them for their futures."

Many alternative educators, on the other hand, say, "Remove

"coincidences"—a child, too, can walk through a library and have a particularly pertinent book fall off the shelf in front of him; a child, too, can go to a friend's house and fall in love with the art form the mother "happens" to be busy with; a child, too, can impulsively turn on the television and be instantly fascinated by the subject under discussion.

But people are concerned that children won't learn the many important and interesting things out there "in time." Well, define "in time." Sure, it's easier for a child to

full potential." This makes me think of a story about a child at an alternative school who had a talent for piano. When he came to the school, he was not at all interested in playing. Instead, he was fascinated with math and spent most of his time studying that. No one pushed piano on him, no one said, "Oh but you're so good at it." Eventually, he picked up his piano playing again on his own. What could have happened had people pushed him? He would most likely have resented the people forcing him to play, he probably would

have to slow a child down, remind her to eat, remind her of bedtime. Passion redirected or interfered with by an outside force quickly shuts down. As this happens, the child, too, begins to shut down. So, should it not be our job as adults to make sure children's passion always remains strong and free?

Youth often complain that their parents have forgotten what it was like to be young. When it comes to schooling, I think that is especially true. We conformed and performed our way through school, we failed our way through school, we hated our way through school, we skipped most of school, we stressed ourselves on our way through school or we just tolerated school, and yet come the time to make the decisions for our children's education, we go back to what we know didn't work for us. Is it only because we don't know any other way of educating? I'm afraid that's no longer an excuse. Too much research has been done, too many books have been written and too many alternatives have been tried and tested.

It's no longer about "preparing children for life." We know better than that. It's about having the courage to break the mold we were brought up in and offer our children a healthier, more "organic," more life-sustaining and joy-maintaining way to be as they grow up. ●

Nicolette Groeneveld is one of the co-founders of the Indigo Sudbury Campus, an alternative school in Edmonton.

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'imposed exposure.'" The response: "But if we don't show kids what's out there, how will they know what they want to do with their lives?" Alright, I say, expose them to things, but if you want to be fair, unbiased and without any agenda of your own, expose your child to *everything*. Impossible, of course. So why not just trust that your child will naturally be drawn to the things that will serve his/her greatest learning? Adults are not the only ones who experience

pick up a second language, but that doesn't mean an adult driven by passion cannot become proficient in a new language. Sure, when you're younger your chances of being a terrific gymnast are better, but that doesn't mean an adult can't enjoy gymnastics or find another activity that offers just as much pleasure and satisfaction.

Then comes the argument, "Well, my child has a natural talent for Z. If I don't push her, she won't reach her

have grown to dislike playing and he would probably have abandoned the piano altogether. Or he would have played in the manner I've seen so many "talented" children play: without any feeling, just going through the motions.

ANY CHILD who is passionate about something (and whether highly talented in that area or not) never needs to be pushed. Passion is the driver and more often than not, parents

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BUSINESS

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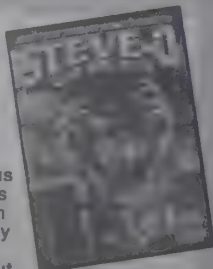
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2. Steve Pineo – Around The Horn (stamp)
3. Blackie & The Rodeo Kings – Bark (true north)
4. Joe Strummer & The Mescaleros – Streetcore (hellcat)
5. The Floor – Autonomy Off/On (the floor)
6. Various – Alive From The Barn Vol.1 (ckua)
7. Just Because I'm A Woman – Songs Of Dolly Parton (sugar hill)
8. Blink 182 – Blink 182 (geffen)
9. Lhasa – The Living Road (select)
10. Outkast – Speakerbox/The Love Below (arista)
11. Corb Lund Band – Modern Pain (corb lund)
12. The Faunts – High Expectations/Low Results (faunts)
13. Story Of The Year – Page Avenue (maverick)
14. Johnny Cash – The Man Comes Around (american)
15. The Dixie Hummingbirds – Diamond Jubilation (rounder)
16. The Shins – Chutes Too Narrow (sub pop)
17. Beautiful – A Tribute To Gordon Lightfoot (northern blues)
18. Sarah McLachlan – Afterglow (netwerk)
19. Mark Lanegan – Here Comes That Weird Chill (beggars)
20. The Unicorns – Who Will Cut Our Hair
When We're Gone? (alien8)
21. Emmylou Harris – Stumble Into Grace (nonesuch)
22. The Rapture – Echoes (vertigo)
23. Most Precious Blood – Our Lady Of Annihilation (trustkill)
24. The Cooper Temple Clause – Kick Up The Fire... (morning)
25. The Ramblin' Ambassadors – Avanti (mint)
26. The Distillers – Coral Fang (hellcat)
27. Paul Westerberg – Come Feel Me Tremble (vagrant)
28. Iron & Wine – The Sea & The Rhythm (sub pop)
29. Guided By Voices – Human Amusements At
Hourly Rates (matador)
30. Van Morrison – Whats Wrong With This Picture? (blue note)

STEVE-O: VOLUME 4 OUT ON BAIL

Jackass alumni and former circus clown Stephen Glover continues to redefine gross-out humor with self-injury in the name of comedy for the uncensored torture-fest Don't Try This at Home Vol.4: Out On Bail. Check him out Dec 28th here in the city somewhere.



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thursday

It's Christmas Day. Instead of listening to music, go make some. Grab some friends, put on some warm clothes and **go sing some carols around the neighborhood**. Even if you can't sing, it's the spirit that counts. That is, if you can remember the words to any of them. Victorian costumes and poodle cuts optional.

friday

It's been nine years since Shuyler Jansen channeled his country ambitions from The Naked And The Dead, found some talented like-minded friends and started up **Old Reliable**. That's a good reason to head over to New City to help them celebrate with a big old hoedown. Joining in the festivities will be the George Bushes, Bud Pluggst and Tex Ass Mikey, and Greg Greenleese. Bring a donation for the Food Bank and get a couple of bucks knocked off the cover.

saturday

There's a lot going on tonight, but those who dig that techno should go to Decadance (10018-105 St) and get an earful of **Chris Liberator**, one of the kings of the UK underground acid sound. This is not a gig to be missed. Joining him on the decks are locals Tryptomene, Neal K and Techdriver. Advance tickets are available at Foosh, doors at 9 p.m.

sunday

Like the hair metal? So do we. Although we can't tell if these guys are for real—I mean, we already have an in-house joke metal band (Knights In White Satan)—but if you believe the hype, then **Headband** are wrapping up a 20-year career with a final show at Seedy's. They all hate each other, so it should make for a good time, in a Spinal Tap kind of way.

monday

This is the day you should actually **attempt to exchange gifts**. What? You tried to do it on Boxing Day? Don't you know that's the day when the bargain piranha comes out of hiding? Word of advice—don't exchange gifts on Boxing Day. Better yet, do what we do. Smile, put the gift back in the box and hide it in your closet as you save it for a special occasion, like Festivus.

tuesday

It's a good night for hard-ass punk rock at the Sidetrack Café. Calgary's latest buzz band **the failure** hit the stage with some of Edmonton's finest, including The Johnsons and Ten Second Epic—both bands worth watching in the coming year. Expect big things and bring ear plugs. It could get really loud, ya know.

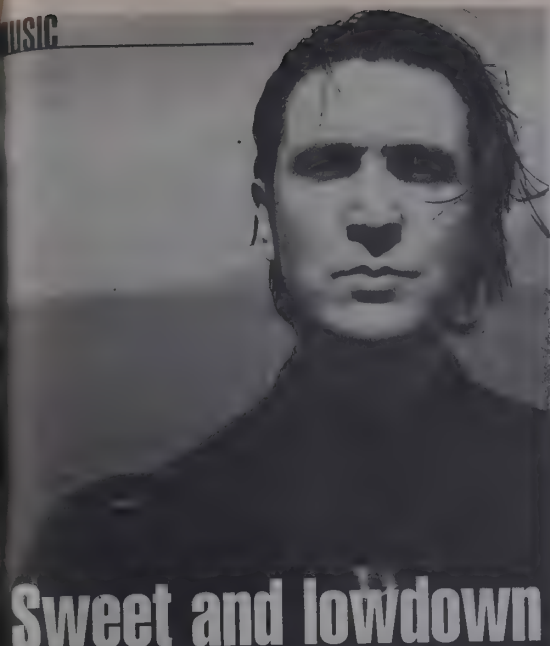
wednesday

Yep. It's **New Years Eve**, the biggest party night of the year. Good thing it's at the end, because imagine if it were in the middle of the year? Am I making any sense at all? There's no point in putting one event over another, so all we can say is have fun, don't drink and drive, stay warm, be nice to your fellow humans. See you in 2004. Maybe we'll finally get those flying cars then.

newswire

White Stripes frontman **Jack White** has been formally charged with aggravated assault following a fight with Von Bondies singer Jason Stollsteimer in a Detroit bar on December 13.... A number of local bands, including the Wednesday Night Heroes, Black Market Inc. and 7 And 7 Is, will gather at New City on January 9 to sing the songs of **Johnny Cash** and the **Clash**, with proceeds donated to the Cross Cancer Institute.... **Morrissey** has signed a new record deal with Sanctuary Records and is currently recording a new album with Blink 182 producer Jerry Finn.... **Wilco** have completed their follow-up to the critically acclaimed *Yankee Hotel Foxtrot* album, aiming for a spring 2004 release.... On January 27, French dance music duo **Daft Punk** will release *Daft Club*, a disc full of remixes and rare tracks previously available only on their website.... Fox Television has picked up a new sitcom starring Wu-Tang rappers **Method Man** and **Redman**.... Rap mogul **Sean "P-Diddy" Combs** will make his Broadway theatre debut in 2004 with a restaging of the drama *A Raisin In The Sun*.





Sweet and lowdown

After 10 years of Big Sugar, Gordie Johnson is adding spice to his life

BY DAVE JOHNSTON

Gordie Johnson has just wrangled some cattle today. Is this his future, now that he's putting an end to Big Sugar? "What kind of question is that?" he laughs over the line from his family farm in central Alberta. "I'm still going to make music."

Yet after a decade of making garantuan blues rock, Johnson is ready to fold up Big Sugar and move on. He's looking at forming a new band and "starting over from scratch," a challenge he's relishing. "It's like having one recipe you can do really well," he explains, "so you make it for your friends every time they come over. At some point you gotta say, 'Guys, don't come over this weekend, because I gotta try something new, but I wanna try it out first.'"

Johnson isn't sure what that new recipe is going to be yet, but for the time being all of his energies are being devoted to letting Big Sugar go out with a bang. "I didn't want it to be a cursory run through the rest of the tour dates in Canada just to get over with," he says. "We're calling quits long before it ever gets to

that, where people are just out there for the money."

AS FURTHER PROOF that he's serious about shutting things down, Johnson says the band is turning down lucrative offers for summer shows. "It's driving the price up like crazy, but I'm not doing it," he insists. "I don't need the money and I'm not doing it for the money. When I was poor, I wasn't doing it for the money. When I'm rich, I'm still not doing it for the money either. That's something that should never change—in my book, anyway."

PREVIOUS ROCK

He points to a recent show the band played in "jaded old Toronto," where they laid down the boogie for three hours for a devoted audience. "Nobody left until we were absolutely done with them," he says proudly. Yet he says picking Edmonton as the locale for the band's final live show was a no-brainer.

"Edmonton has always been really good to us," Johnson says. "It's a second home for the band, the crowds have been supportive and we've got a history there. We've filled the Rev to capacity. We've played the Shaw Conference Centre a lot of times. Hell, I do my shopping in Edmonton."

People might still dig songs like "Diggin' A Hole" and "Ride Like Hell,"

but Johnson "is interested in a musical reinvention. 'Big Sugar is getting to a stage where it's been getting harder and harder to make any moves,'" he sighs. "The video stations in Canada, for example, think we're more like an adult video thing, but they haven't looked at my crowds. There have been adult situations, of course," he laughs, "but there's no adult behaviour."

Throughout his career in Big Sugar, Johnson has constantly tried to push the sound, incorporating dub and reggae into the classic blues format, going so far as to release a complete dub album under the name Alkaline. Yet the expectations of radio and television to deliver something that sounds the same as their older material has Johnson equally frustrated and abhorred. "Guess what?" he queries rhetorically. "Our older stuff doesn't sound like our even older songs. It's never been the same with us. [The music] needs to shed its skin and come back as something new."

COMPILING THE RECENT two-disc retrospective *Hit and Run* gave Johnson a chance to evaluate the band's triumphs. "But we get that every night, too," he adds. "Even people who are recent Big Sugar fans, who came to their first Big Sugar concert last week, they're as interested in our first records as they would be with our latest. That's not always the case with a band—people usually want your latest thing, or they only want your old stuff. Holding the crowd's interest has been a really consistent thing in our career."

Perpetual transformation may have been the band's hallmark, but it was also a risky thing to do in an industry that favours the status quo. "Ride Like Hell" was risky when we put it out, and so was "Turn The Lights On," Johnson says. "Now for someone at Universal to go through the *Hit and Run* record and say, 'Wow, that song has a No Doubt feel to it.' Man, I was playing reggae before Gwen Stefani had her first period—I don't need to hear this from my record company."

Johnson has expanded his reach into producing over the last few years, overseeing albums by Wide Mouth Mason and the Trews. Recently, he wrapped up recording for Truth & Rights, a reggae project featuring Big Sugar veterans Mojah and Garry Lowe. "I don't want to get to distracted by that, though," he says about producing and making reggae. "I have a rather daunting task in front of me. I've filled the swimming pool with gasoline and thrown a match in—now I'm going to attempt to jump over that." ●

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MUSIC



music notes

BY PHIL DUPERRON AND JERED STUFFCO

Kidz on the ball

Whiz Kidz • With The Homewreckers and Raygun Cowboys • Seedy's • Sat, Dec. 27 You'd think that belting out energetic punk anthems with the Wednesday Night Heroes for hordes of screaming kiddies would be enough of an outlet for anyone. But for G Whiz (a.k.a. Graeme MacKinnon), there was still something missing. So along with fellow Hero Kradical on guitar, B and J

Whiz of Our Mercury and Nik Kozub, the Whiz Kidz were born earlier this year.

"We were feeling that the Edmonton scene was just lacking positivity," says G Whiz. "We were just feeling music was lacking positivity so we had to kick music back into the positive gear and just show that friendship still exists in the world of punk, y'know. We just wanted to do something that would be the ultimate outlet, which would be to play really short songs, really fast songs. Play a style of music we don't necessarily get to play with our other bands."

Fast and short is an understatement when it comes to the Whiz Kidz. Their set used to clock in at 15 minutes of pure mayhem, but now they've expanded it to 20 with the addition of four new songs. While we're on the subject of numbers, they recorded their first 11 songs in less than six hours, taking up only 10 minutes of tape, which should be released soon as a seven inch.

"It's pretty sweet," says Whiz. "You can get an idea of the speed of the

affair. Now we just have this adventure to record the new songs and try to get them on the same release."

For the Whiz Kidz it's also a chance to reintroduce kids to the kind of hardcore bands like 7 Seconds and Youth of Today played so many years ago before the word was adopted by modern screamo. "I think [hardcore] is kind of gone through this evolution process where a lot of the punk scene to be faded out and there's more of the metal crossover," Whiz says. "That's cool for them, but it just doesn't do anything for me. People call it hardcore but I just don't see how it is. For me hardcore was just a stripped down form of really fast really angry punk." (PD)

Putting the Heads together one last time

Headband • With Twin Fangs • Seedy's • Sun, Dec 28 Rock fans all over the world are greeting the new with a mixture of sadness, regret and

20 reasons you should'a been at seedy's in 2003:

Senk With a Bomb
 the Homewreckers
 RADIO BERLIN
 Krazy
 bitty perdu
 SICK FITS
 the DOERS
 the Million Dollar Marxists
 AA Sound System
 THE FLOOR
 The Constantines
 the Bltchin' Camaros
 HIMSA
 7&7IS
 WHIZ KIDS
 Great Lake Swimmers
 MAYOR M'C
 BLACK RICE
 XAVIER RUDD

make a new years resolution to see more live music in 2004 starting with:

Kasuals & the Operators
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SHERLOCK HOLMES (WEM) Richard Blaze

TRACK CASE The... Nothing at All, The... Ten Second Epic

BJS

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BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE Metal Underdog

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ENTER'S PUB DJ "Name a..." Dan

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Themed Trivia: with DJ Whit...

PUMP Every Tue:... oke contest with DJ...

NEW CITY SUBURBS urection:... tural/EBM/electro/goth... Nik Rifeelya

RATTLESLAKE SALOON Every Tue: DJ Butter, two... sessions with Leon

THE ROOST Hot Butt... e. t. with DJ Janny: 8... ight, \$1 (member)/\$4... (member)

WYTHE'S Electro-trash: elec... nunk funk with DJ Miss... mpered

WYTHE LOUNGE Dan's Rockin' Holiday... no cover

WED

LIVE MUSIC

STARS Upper Room:... New Year's Eve:... onatun, Spawned by Rot... t Cast, Slt Whist Society... m Room: Battle of the... s finale, live band event

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

Jerry, Jerry and the Sons of Rhythm; 10pm; \$12

BLUE AND WHITE Lani Cockrel and the Groove (Chicago); \$3; champagne at midnight

BUD'S (ST. ALBERT) The Hootin' Annie's, Los Nacos; 4:58-3826

CASINO (EDMONTON) Colleen Rao, Cornerstone (country/rock)

CASINO (YELLOWHEAD) Robin Kelly and Martin Andrews (tribute to Elvis and Rod Stewart)

CITY HALL New Year's Eve Downtown: Klondike Kate and Madison County; 423-2822

DELTA EDMONTON

SOUTH HOTEL 4th Annual Latin New Years: Orquesta Energia (12-piece Latin band), DJ Moreno; 6pm (door), 7:30pm (dinner), 9pm (dance); \$65 (adv, includes party favours and champagne, reservations for seating for the dance portion only, is available by calling MBM Sound after advance tickets are purchased)/\$30 (door, dance only); tickets available at TIX on the Square 420-1757

DUSTER'S Glen Watkins; \$10 (buffet)

ELEPHANT AND CASTLE ON WHYTE The Swill Kings; \$10 (adv); tickets available at Elephant and Castle on Whyte 439-4545

FILTHY MCNASTY'S Thel Uncas Old Boys; \$9; TIX available at Blackbird Myozik

FOUR ROOMS (DOWNTOWN) Kelly Alanna; \$40 (5pm, early dinner); \$75 (6:30-7:30pm dinner), includes jazz, midnight snack and champagne

HIGHRUM SIN; \$5 (adv), \$10 (door), includes party favours, champagne at midnight; dinner specials available

J.J.'S Live Wire (rock music); 10pm; \$5

JASPER PLACE HOTEL Randy Hillman and Bob Rushton; 8pm; \$10 (adv)/\$13 (door); 439-1906

KELLY'S Mourning Wood, Rhythm; 10pm; \$12

KINGSBRIGHT PUB Trooper, Stuff, karaoke; \$8; 433-2599

L.B.'S Look Twice; 7pm (door), 9:30pm (show); \$20 (adv), includes midnight lunch, party favours, and champagne at midnight; 460-9100

LEGENDS PUB Offramp (classic rock, blues); \$30 (buffet/dance); 481-2786

LONGRIDERS Classic Rock New Year's Bash: Delinim (former members of Face-First); 7pm (door); \$10; includes party favours and champagne at midnight; 479-7400

MATFIELD INN 2nd Annual Ballroom Gala: Pam Proud Band; 6:30pm (dinner), party (until 2am); \$87; includes buffet dinner; 484-1827

BATTLESHAKE SALOON Sean Hogan (CCMA 2003 roots artist of the year), The Clayton Bellamy Band (country); 7pm (door); \$15 (includes party favours)

RED'S Mardi Gras New Year Mega Bash: Doug and the Slugs, DJ's Kenny K, David Stone; 8pm (door), 9:30pm (show); \$15 (first tickets)/\$24.95 (adv)/\$29.95 (day of); tickets available at Red's

RENDEZVOUS Gate, Methodical Breed, Monaker; 10pm; \$5; 444-1822

ROSSDALE COMMUNITY HALL Little Flower open stage and party hosted by Brian Gregg; 8pm; no cover

ST. ALBERT ALLIANCE CHURCH Genesis 2004: Drenth, Eminence, The Gate; 9pm-2am; \$10 (adv)/\$13 (door); tickets available at Innovations Music, Victory Church on the Rock North-East, St. Albert Victory Life Church, Christian Publications, door; 468-4432

SEEDY'S The Kasuals, The Operators; \$10

SHAW CONFERENCE CENTRE The Bear's New Year's Eve Bash 2004: Big Sugar, Exit 303, The Trevis; 8pm; \$49.50; tickets available at

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BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE

VENUE GUIDE

STARS Upper Fl, 10545-82 Ave, 439-1422

THE ARMOURY 10310-85 Ave, 702-1800

BACKROOM VOKKA BAR 10324-82 Ave, upstairs, 436-4418

ALLY BOB'S LOUNGE Continental Inn, 16625 Stony Plain Road, 484-7751

BLACK DOG FREEHOUSE 10425-82 Ave, 439-1082

BLUES ON WHYTE 101-82 Ave, 439-5058

BOOTS 10242-106 St, 421-5014

BUDDY'S NIGHTCLUB 17258 Jasper Ave, 488-851

BUD'S (ST. ALBERT) Capilano Mall, St. Albert, 826-826

CLIENTE NIGHTCLUB 1051-3 Jasper Ave, 425-3130

CAPITOL HILL PUB 4204 Stony Plain Rd, 454-0611

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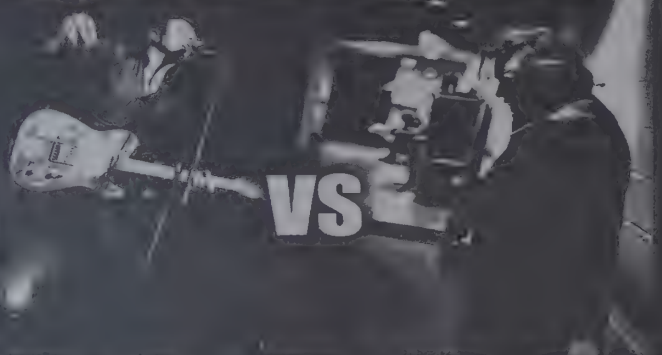
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IN STORES DEC 2

smalls singer Mike Caldwell does covers his way in Tex Ass Mikey

BY PHIL DUPERRON

Everyone who hasn't spent the last two years under a rock knows what happened to Corb Lund after the smalls called it quits, but what about soft-spoken singer Mike Caldwell? Turns out he's been just as busy as his globetrotting ex-bandmate, just in a far different capacity. Almost immediately after the split, Caldwell was approached by longtime friend and drummer Paul Roberts to play guitar in his cover band.

"He called me up one day and asked me if I wanted to give that a try and I'd never done anything like it," says Caldwell. "It was a little weird, y'know. It was tough because obviously when you're in that kind of band, the people aren't coming there to see you or necessarily even for music or anything. Some of them are, but y'know, they're coming there to drink basically, right. Wasting the night."

At first Caldwell stayed out of the spotlight while learning the 200-plus classic rock and country tunes necessary to play three-night stretches in booze holes across the province. Since he didn't play guitar in the smalls, it was enough of a challenge just getting the repertoire down. He's still playing in a couple "straight" cover bands including the three-piece Texas Mickey with Roberts and bassist Kerie Brown. In fact, he's been on the road playing shows every weekend for the last eight months, keeping him "as busy as ever." But a few months ago they decided to start up another project more for fun than commercial endeavours.

"I think we were just driving along in the van one day and we got to talking about it and thought it might be kinda cool to have a band like this

where we could do stuff that we thought was fun," says Caldwell. "Maybe do a Merle Haggard song then another Black Sabbath song then another Merle Haggard song and another Black Sabbath song and that type of thing. I thought it was funny and we thought we'd have a good time doing it, so we started picking away at it."

AND SO one fall evening, Budd Pluggst and Tex Ass Mikey took to the stage armed with a set of fun, obscure covers and knocked 'em dead. "We've only played one show, at the Black Dog, and the response was really good. It was a really fun night," Caldwell says.

"The Old Reliable guys were there and they saw the show and liked us I guess, so they asked us to do this thing with them."

While Caldwell says playing the cover circuit is an all right way to make a living, playing for a more appreciative crowd was obviously a boost. "It was fun. There were actually people standing and looking at you and things like that," he says, "that just don't happen in a lot of the places we play. It's just people arguing or whatever, staring their beer kind of thing. But yeah, it was a fun night and it was somewhat inspiring that this might be a good thing."

The band definitely intends to start writing their own songs, but for now Caldwell is content with the new aspects of his career. "We're not doing any original stuff yet," he says. "We're just doing some older kinda covers that we can't normally do in the types of places we play with the other group. [Songwriting is] actually not something I really wanted to do for quite a while. After the smalls broke up I didn't really feel much inspiration for that kind of thing. And plus, since I'd never done cover band work it was quite a lot of work for me just to build up the repertoire." ●

BUDD PLUGGST AND TEX ASS MIKEY
With Old Reliable,
George Bushes and Greg Greenleaf
New City • Fri, Dec 2

Dizzee spells

Boy in da Corner
prodigy Dizzee
Rascal refuses to let
himself get boxed in

BY SEAN AUSTIN-JOYNER

It's not often that an overseas urban artist becomes so huge that before he's nominated for any music awards on this side of the ocean—before his album is even available on this side of the Atlantic—he's considered a hot artist. But for East London's Dizzee Rascal, it's happening.

Dizzee's debut album, *Boy in da Corner*, not only won him the 2003 Mercury Music Prize, an award given to the top British musician of the year, it's also won him praise from critics across Europe and North America. The album's highly experimental sound, with its computerized drums and über-heavy basslines, represents not just an entirely new style of music, but a new way of developing it as well. And while the 19-year-old talent admits he knew *Boy in da Corner* was good, he says the Mercury Prize was unexpected.

"It's the biggest, most prestigious award you can win in the U.K.," he says from the offices of XL Recordings in London, which is also home to the Prodigy and Basement Jaxx. "It was amazing for me because it was an album full of fucked-up ideas and me not being scared to try new things, and it got a massive response that I didn't anticipate. To tell the truth, I was just surprised I won the award. I knew that Ms. Dynamite won it the year before, but the year before that I didn't even know what the Mercury award was."

It's Dizzee's disregard for conventional production methods that's gain-

ing him the most attention. Instead of catering to the tastes of radio programmers, he's opted to blend hip-hop, garage, reggae, rock and R&B into a sound that doesn't fit comfortably into any genre at all. Producers who follow their wallets instead of their hearts are what make music boring, he says. But when you remove the boundaries, it speeds up the production process and makes the resulting music sound a lot less generic.

Dizzee got his start as a pirate radio DJ in London. Eventually, he entered the world of music production and started putting out white label pressings of his songs. While heavily influenced by England's stark economic and racial landscape, Dizzee has also kept a close eye on America's hip-hop scene—two particular regions in particular.

PROFILE HIP-HOP

"Personally, I like a lot of the South stuff, like Three 6 Mafia, Cash Money and OutKast," he says as he breaks into the chorus of OutKast's "Unhappy." "As far as America goes, I think that's the closest-sounding music to what we've got over here. It's minimal, dark-sounding music." Still, Dizzee hasn't completely converted to the Dirty South lifestyle. "[I haven't] touched the couch medicine recently or explored that culture," he says, referring to the use of over-the-counter cough and cold syrups as hallucinogens, a phenomenon largely associated with the Southern states.

REGARDLESS, the two cultures have one negative thing in common—the presence of the infamous player haters. He says the London garage



and hip-hop scenes are filled with animosity and competition at the moment, despite their surprisingly small size. "It's kind of like crabs in a bucket at the moment," he says. "Everyone's got this little thing where they're just clashing and bad-mouthing each other. I was always doing something different and I think everyone recognized that, even if they didn't like it at first. It made me different, so I didn't feel too concerned with what everyone else was doing."

Dizzee thinks his style is similar enough to what's going on in the U.S. to make a smooth crossover possible—he even holds out the hope of working with some of the people he grew up listening to, like Jay-Z and Nas. And regardless of the praise *Boy in da Corner* may be getting, Dizzee says he's not going to get a swelled head when the album is released in North America in January. "I try not to let it faze anything," he says. "I'm on track with what I want to do musically, so as appreciative as I am, I know that I just have to stay on track and stay focused. It's easy to be content. I ain't content, because I ain't done a quarter of what I need to do yet." ●

Dizzee Rascal's album, *Boy in da Corner* (XL), is in stores now.

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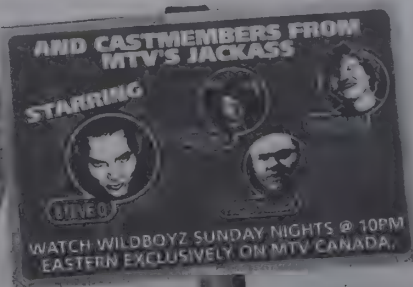


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root down

By JENNY FENIAK

Latino America

America Rosa • Sledtrack Café • Sat, Dec 27 While some local children have visions of sugarplums dancing in their heads, their full-grown counterparts often let their imaginations drift off in other pleasant directions. A popular mid-winter dream is escaping our frigid surroundings and heading for a sun-drenched paradise. But even though practical realities may keep those trips at bay, there are ways to indulge in these fantasies without leaving town.

America Rosa, a local 11-piece Latino band, will be heating things up this weekend with the sounds of salsa and *batucada*, a South American rock rhythm originating in Brazil, Argentina and Chile, where the group's founder Sergio Gonzalez hails from. "I did grow up with music, not in my family, but music with my friends back home. And it was a different kind of music, more like North American or European music, you know, and the rock kind of thing. Latin music wasn't in my mind at the time," says Gonzalez, explaining that his musical perspective changed after moving to Canada 25 years ago. "Once I moved to Canada, there was different backgrounds, especially from Central America like Cuba and Puerto Rico where they actually carried the salsa sound—and that's when

I got very interested and I learned a lot about that music. But you know what they say: you learn more or you become someone else out of your own territory."

Gonzalez spent some time playing with a band in town but eventually realized his musical vision wasn't consistent with the other players. So he found a few like-minded and talented local musicians and America Rosa was born. Shortly after establishing themselves, America Rosa recorded and released a self-titled CD in 1994, but according to Gonzalez their Latin sounds back then were blended with more North American rhythms. Now, after releasing a 2003 demo with full brass and percussion sections, America Rosa strictly performs music from Latin America, even if some of the members are native Canucks trained and schooled as jazz players. "With the new people I have, they've been doing this for at least three years to get to the point we are at now to be able to play this kind of music," says Gonzalez. "But it's very difficult to learn this Latin music. As they started hearing this music, they got so interested because it was so complicated and more challenging to them to play."

Now with a well-garnished and full lineup, America Rosa is ready to rip up the rhythms of Latin America and invites everyone to join the party and dance the winter away.

Plume with a view

An Acoustic Evening with Mike Plume and Jenny Orenstein • The Provincial Museum • Sat, Dec 27 After riding some pretty big waves over the last couple years, Edmonton native Mike Plume has set sail for home yet again. But after uprooting from Nashville—where he met his wife Jenny Orenstein while writing for Blue Water Music—most of his time has been

spent north of the 49th parallel in Toronto, which the couple now calls home. They moved there permanently this summer so Orenstein could finish an internship and Plume says he rather likes the city he learned to hate while growing up in Edmonton.

"I think we're going to be in Toronto for a while," he says. "I like it there. Y'know, being an Edmonton boy, we're just bred to not like Toronto. I mean, every time I've been there I never liked it. But when I moved I sort of became part of the neighbourhood and my wife's family all lives there and it became a lot more like home."

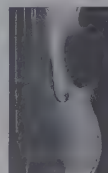
Along with America, Plume has also parted ways with his longtime band, who played on Plume's first official solo "acoustic adventure," *Table For One*, released last April. Simultaneously, Plume also released *Born So Long Ago—Live*, a recording made with his band in 2000 at the now defunct local venue The Rev.

So with the sweet goodbyes said and done, Plume is like a man possessed roaming the continent with his guitar, "trying my best to be Bob Dylan," he jokes over the phone shortly before an acoustic spotlight in North Dakota. Recently, Plume brought about a gathering of Calgary musicians to help record another pile of his songs and expects to release the album titled *Rock N' Roll Recordings* next spring.



Mike Plume

In between all his writing and recording, Plume is slowly plucking his way back to Edmonton for his seven annual Christmas concert. "For the seven years as well, I've been doing the afternoon drive on K-Rock with Terry Evans on Christmas Eve—that's been a lot of fun too," Plume says about his holiday traditions, bringing my guitar and sing Christmas songs and all that goofy stuff. It's a lot of fun, y'know. It's such a tradition now that even if I wanted to take Christmas off, I don't think I could anymore. I'm starting too feel like Jerry Lewis and Jerry's Kids and I got kind of stuck with this telethon. But I'm complaining in the least. It's fun, y'know—I mean it really is." ●



classical notes

By ALLISON KYDD

Classical error

The nicest compliment a columnist can get is the suggestion that she (or he) has a following. So I'm thrilled when folks say they read *Vue's* Classical Notes regularly. It's a compliment, however, that brings responsibility with it—and embarrassment when I've made a mistake.

Take last week, for instance. Although he managed to make sense of it, my editor must have wondered what was going on when I accidentally sent him an early draft rather than the final version of my column. I also apologize to the Canadian Chamber Orchestra and the Select Soiree Series (home of *Christmas in the Parlour*). Both of these concerts took place last weekend and, because of my error and the timing of our holiday issues, did not get the coverage they deserved

and I intended. Perhaps you missed them? Let me fill you in. After all, you will want to catch these performers and organizations the next time they appear on your calendar.

The Canadian Chamber Orchestra, I'm sure you remember, is the brainchild of maestro Grzegorz Nowak and the Metamorphosis Foundation. Although plagued by some organizational problems, the orchestra still attracts superb soloists and a faithful core audience. The soloist on Sunday evening, December 21, was pianist Dickran Atamian, memorable for his fiery appearance with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra two years ago, back in the glory days of the Nowak regime. His performance on Sunday did not disappoint and brings to mind a review in *The New York Times*, which describes him as "a pianist of enormous virtuosity and propulsive energy...daredevil playing evoking an aura of poetic mystery."

Christmas in the Parlour, featuring soprano Judith Richardson, pianist Tammy-Jo Mortensen and violinist Frank Ho, created quite a different atmosphere. It was actually set in a romantic Victorian parlour, with the smell of hot, mulled wine infusing the house. Richardson, Mortensen and Ho are all music teachers with their own studios as well as frequent performers. You may have heard them play

together at Convocation Hall this past fall. Mortensen also organizes the Sundays at 3 p.m. organ recital series, and Ho was part of the Piano Plus Series at All Saints Anglican Cathedral in November.

On that occasion, Ho, clarinetist John Mahon and keyboardist extraordinaire Jeremy Spurgeon played a program of Russian music. Last Saturday and Sunday, Ho also applied his clean, classical style to seasonal favourites, such as "Ave Maria" and "What Child is This?" The parlour series aims to provide something for everyone around a theme and in an intimate, homey space. The trio also likes to end their concerts on a happy note. That means what Richardson calls "tinsel tunes" along with classical sets, arias, art songs and musical theatre.

Last week also brought the return of *Music of Christmas: Voices, Bells and Brass*, a more sophisticated program than the voices (Greenwood Singers) and bells (University of Alberta Handbell Ringers) brought to the ESO pops concert, *Yuletide Fantasy*, a week earlier. The performers sounded best when on their own or with organ accompaniment, with their customary conductors—the singers and bell ringers with Robert de Frece and the Mill Creek Colliery Band with Malcolm Forsyth. Not to discourage collaboration, but here was evidence that more is not

always better.

One of the few repeats from the earlier concert was the lively "Up to the Housetop" by bells alone. For the most part the silvery notes were clear and precise, which I know from experience is not easy. Ringing handbells more complicated than it looks. To wear those natty white gloves for reason and the movement is a snap of the wrist, not a wave.

There were several solo performances in the three groups, but more impressive was that of host Sir Francis Price. His manner was relaxed and engaging, and, thanks to his research assistant, came armed with wonderful tidbits of information about the various voices. On the other hand, I must admit my fondness for traditional program notwithstanding. The evening did run rather long.

Though many of the usual Christmas concerts have come and gone, there are still a couple of events coming. On December 28 and 29, the Opera NUOVA presents Menotti's *Amahl and the Night Visitors* along with *Only a Miracle*, and on New Year's Eve at Holy Trinity Anglican Church there's first nightingale with Ensemble de la Rue. Along with composers la Rue, des Prez, Byrd, Praetorius and Mendelssohn, expect some modern works and a couple of pieces that might come as a surprise to regular audience members. ●

NEW SOUNDS

DUMPTRUCK
POSITIVELY DUMPTRUCK
(KODISC)
DUMPTRUCK
FOR THE COUNTRY
(KODISC)

Dumtruck lead-man Seth Tiven continued to record with a variety of different people under that moniker nearly two decades, these Rykodisc issues (with bonus tracks and live cuts) come from the band's '80s hey days, a time when it was called "lege rock," not "alternative rock." At the time, Dumtruck's lush guitar sounds and knack for penning catchy melodies had them compared to the likes of REM and Mission of Burma as America's underground faves. But thanks to record company politics, a tattered membership and multi-million dollar lawsuits, Dumtruck's career was always inhibited. And, as these reissues show, that's too bad (Ryko has also reissued 1983's *D is for Dumtruck*).

Positively Dumtruck earned the band critical acclaim across North America in 1985; produced by Don Dixon, it lacks of the earthy guitar-and-bass interplay of early REM (Dixon also worked extensively with REM through their early days). If REM's seminal *Murmur* was the coming-out party for American indie rock, *Positively Dumtruck* was the next step.

While not as in-your-face catchy as *Positively Dumtruck*, 1987's *For the Country* sees the band, now fully fronted by Tiven after the departure of John, embrace country twang—and it's easy to argue that this album was a precursor for all things "alternative country." In fact, I'd be shocked to find that Wilco's Jeff Tweedy didn't have it in his collection. The reissues aren't just worth historical value; these songs are still vibrant. And if you've never heard Dumtruck before, there's no denying that you'll be hearing a dated act. *Positively*: ★★★★★; *For the Country*: ★★★★★ —STEVE SANDOR

COREY HARRIS
MISSISSIPPI TO MALI
(UNDER)

Who doesn't dig the blues? Or traditional African music? Take these two 21st-century staples and let the very-talented African artist Corey Harris fuse them together, and what do you get? In this case, an underwhelming album. Harris first came to my attention on his mesmerizing vocals on "Against the Law" on *Mermaid Avenue Vol. II*, the Bragg/Wilco collaboration. An accomplished, well-travelled, multi-instrumentalist and singer, his idea for *Mississippi to Mali* was brilliant: to go to the meccas of African-American and African music and trace the threads link-



ing them together. But something's a bit off in the execution. I can't really put my finger on what doesn't work here—other than that the songs blend together too much, that nothing really jumps out of the speakers. Harris was inspired to make this album after participating in *The Blues*, a documentary Martin Scorsese made for PBS. Perhaps he took too much of a documentary approach to the record. ★★ —DAN RUBINSTEIN

ORIGINAL SOUNDTRACK
HAGGARD
(SANCTUARY)

Professional skateboarder, *Jackass*/CKY veteran and now filmmaker Bam Margera really likes Finnish love-metal rockers His Infernal Majesty (HIM). A lot. That's why there are three of their songs on the soundtrack to the movie he produced, wrote, edited, directed and probably did the catering for as well.

So along with the moaning, emotional metal-influenced sound of HIM, listeners are also exposed to Clutch, New Order and even an uninspiring song from CKY (his brother's band). As well as, somewhat surprisingly, Iggy and the Stooges' classic "Search and Destroy."

Less surprising is the fact that Margera and friends have a band of their own, GNAR Kill, and decided to slap two of their tracks on the album too—their sound is exactly what you'd expect from guys who find "poo diving" (jumping into raw sewage) a hilarious thing to do. Of course, if you do find that funny, then you'll probably enjoy their cover of Turbonegro's "I Got Erection," which includes such



throatily delivered lyrics as "Ring my ding and suck my dong... ERECTION!" It isn't bad music—it's just a soundtrack. ★★★ —JAMES ELFORD

AGAINST ME
AS THE ETERNAL COWBOY
(FAT WRECK CHORDS)

I was drawn to this disc by the "influenced by Billy Bragg" comment in the first sentence of *Against Me's* bio, and while this album does have an Euro alt-country feel to it, there's still a bit of punk in there. Lately, a shitload of punk rock bands lately have been giving into the temptation to over-produce their stuff, yet *Against Me* seem to have shunned the idea. The result is a refreshing change of pace, with skyward-shooting sound that still doesn't sound like everything was overdubbed a zillion ridiculous times. What you get here is straight-up titty-twistin' punk rock for cowboys.

Singer Tom Gabel really shows a lot of emotion in his anti-establishment lessons and gets the point across rather well, getting aggressive on the rock songs, while slowing it down with a sweeter-sounding voice for the acoustic melodies like "Sink Florida Sink" or my fave, "Cavalier Eternal," about a relationship gone bad.

The only downfall for me was the measly 25 minutes this record plays for. With a lot of punk-bands keeping their songs short (as they should), I'd like to see the bands putting a few more songs on their albums to extend the playtime and make our purchases worth every penny. ★★★★★ —LIAM HARVEY OSWALD

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ON THE COVER

Hearthbreaking *House*

Ex-Edmontonian Vadim Perelman courts Oscars with *House of Sand and Fog*

BY PAUL MATWYCHUK

Before I talked to him over the phone last week, my sole impression of Vadim Perelman, the director, co-producer and co-writer of the new film *House of Sand and Fog*, was based on an article in the December 22 issue of *Newsweek* in which he came across as... well, frankly, as a bit of a jerk.

"Although you've never heard of Vadim Perelman," the piece began, "he already has a reputation in Hollywood. A bad one." The article (entitled "The Ego Has Landed") then proceeded to list all the powerful industry figures he'd supposedly pissed off while making his film—from his former agents at ICM to the

bigwigs at Dreamworks to actress Julianne Moore, who *Newsweek* claimed had been all but cast as the female lead before Perelman made a last-minute decision to go with Jennifer Connelly, hot off her Oscar win for *A Beautiful Mind*, instead. "He's a beautiful T-45 tank," *House* star Ben Kingsley said admiringly, "the kind that crashed into Berlin in 1945."

"That isn't me—they caught me in a moment and decided to run with it," Perelman says over the phone from Los Angeles. And certainly, the guy I find myself talking to sounds very different from the foul-mouthed, bridge-burning fellow portrayed in the *Newsweek* article. This Vadim Perelman makes a special point of praising his collaborators, he humbly thanks his actors for putting their trust in a first-time feature filmmaker like himself and he doesn't utter a single swearword during our entire half-hour conversation. (He also says putting Connelly in the movie was far from a last-minute decision, that in fact she was the very next actor he cast after

landing Kingsley.) "I'm passionate about what I do," Perelman says, "and I feel incredibly blessed, incredibly lucky. I'm completely and utterly fortunate to be in this place, and I'd never take that away from anybody who got me here."

"Here" is an enviable spot indeed, especially for an unknown director like Perelman. As the pre-Oscar season heats up, *House of Sand and Fog* (based on the excellent 1999

PREVIEW **DRAMA**

novel by Andre Dubus III) is emerging as a dark horse contender in several key categories: Kingsley and Connelly are widely regarded as likely Best Actor and Best Actress nominees, while Iranian actress Shohreh Aghdashloo, who gives a wonderfully layered performance as Kingsley's wife, just won the Best Supporting Actress award from the influential New York Film Critics' Circle. "[Shohreh] was so incredibly pleased to be in this film and play an Iranian

woman in a real way," Perelman says. "She's this very accomplished actress in Iran, but for 25 years the only roles she was offered when she came to the States were as the woman who wears a bandanna or a burqa over her head."

Some pundits fret that the film may be too dark and depressing for it to be fully embraced by the Academy. This is a movie, after all, where nearly every major character winds up dying or attempting suicide. But that didn't stop *In the Bedroom*, a similarly downbeat domestic drama based, coincidentally, on a story by Dubus's father, from snagging a Best Picture nomination a couple of years ago.

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG begins with Kathy Nicolo (Connelly), a recovering drug addict and alcoholic, getting evicted from her house by the county sheriff for nonpayment of taxes. With no savings and only the money from her hand-to-mouth job as a housecleaner to support her, Kathy is soon reduced to

living out of her car and bathing in a public restroom while she waits for her lawyer to straighten the matter out. Meanwhile, though, Kathy's house is purchased at auction by Behrani (Kingsley), a former colonel in the Iranian army who has been reduced to working pride-wounding, low-paying jobs for construction crews and convenience stores—a man who hides from his wife and children even while their savings gradually dwindle away to nothing. In other words, someone is going to fall between the cracks here—both Kathy and Behrani are determined to make sure it isn't them.

Perelman knows what it's like to fall through society's cracks. He was born in 1963 in Kiev; when he was 14, he and his mother (who had been widowed five years earlier when Perelman's father was killed in a car accident) left Kiev and wound up in Rome. There, Perelman lived as a street urchin, scrounging



ed and money while his mother waited for her visa to be approved so they could move to, of all places, Edmonton, Alberta.

I'm sorry—did I forget to mention that Perelman is an Edmonton boy? He's so Edmontonian, in fact, that he was part of the electrical crew that built Phase II of West Edmonton Mall.

"I lived there for eight or 10 years," he says. "My sister lived there—she moved there first. And this was during the oil boom, so it was like California in the '30s—there were jobs to be had. I went to the University of Alberta, and in fact that's where I first discovered film. I was just taking a degree in general science and midway through my second year I took an easy arts elective course—Film Appreciation 101.

And I remember, one of the first things they did was show us this documentary about Norman Jewison making *Fiddler on the Roof* in Czechoslovakia or wherever it was. You have to remember, this was before *El True Hollywood Stories* and all those things, so I had no idea about the filmmaking process or that it was even about. I was never really into film. But seeing him beating this world around him and on the screen—I said, 'This is what I want to do.' It was like a lightning bolt struck me. It was that sudden, it was that incredible. You know, in one of my interviews, someone said something very astute to me—he said, 'I think the reason you wanted to create that world was because yours was falling apart.'"

Perelman spent a couple of years studying at the Ryerson Film Institute and soon found work in Toronto directing TV commercials and music videos. The work kept coming when he moved to Los Angeles, where he began landing big-time assignments from clients like Nike, Microsoft, Ford and General Motors. But *House of Sand and Fog*, with its understated camerawork, drab settings and morally ambiguous characters, is not the kind of film you'd imagine a director from the world of commercials and videos would want to make. "I know, I know," Perelman

says. "We're supposed to only make movies like *Underworld*."

Perhaps after all those years of working on films where making his message as simple and digestible as possible was the whole point, Perelman was hungry to tackle material that offered a more ambiguous outlook on the world. "When I read the book," he says, "my allegiance was completely split down the middle and I wanted to preserve that in the film. I didn't want people to make easy judgments—that he's good and she's bad or vice versa. I wanted it to be like real life, where people are not all good or all bad. We sometimes do things we're proud of and sometimes we do things we regret.... I wanted every character to be culpable."

IF ANYTHING, Perelman is arguably much harder on his characters, especially Behrani, than Dubus was. The book tells the story from the first-person perspectives of three different characters (Behrani, Kathy and Lester, a married sheriff with whom Kathy has an ill-advised fling). The technique is especially effective at getting readers to understand Behrani's pride, the extent of his desire to preserve a way of life for his family and the panic he feels that his control over his own destiny is slipping away. Dubus also takes great pains to establish that Behrani was not involved with the more unsavoury practices of the Iranian army under the Shah. Perelman, however, keeps everything externalized and in the moment—no flashbacks, no voiceovers—which means it takes much longer for the audience to see past Behrani's stern military bearing.

"At the start of the book," Perelman says, "Behrani describes his futile search for work—how he wore his best Italian suit to go to these human resources meetings where people would just brush him off. He says, 'The only interview I could get was with someone training to be a human resources manager.' And my heart just broke at that—I think that's where you gain a lot of sympathy for him. Actually, I wish I'd put

that in. That could be a great film all on its own—everything leading up to his daughter's wedding at the start of the film. But I also think that once he gets into the scenes with his family, the audience starts caring for him."

AND KINGSLEY GIVES such a beautiful, compelling performance—at once rigid yet soulful—that it's impossible not to invest yourself in his character's journey. He has one marvelous moment after another: joyfully crying "Little bird! Little bird!" as he hurries down the driveway to greet his newly married daughter; refusing to be intimidated when Lester threatens to call the immigration department on him if he doesn't give up the house; bargaining desperately with God at the end of the film when tragedy unexpectedly strikes his family. "There's no one else who could have done this role," Perelman says. "We really didn't even have a second choice. Andre Dubus's wife even sent him the book when he was finished writing it. I always say he has the heart of a lion and the precision of a bird."

Well, the guy certainly knows how to pay a compliment—even if *Newsweek* is right about Perelman's propensity for making enemies, he seems like someone who can always charm his way back onto their good side. And even if he can't, he's still got plenty of powerful allies: Steven Spielberg is producing Perelman's next film, an adaptation of the Stephen King/Peter Straub fantasy novel *The Talisman*. Not bad for a onetime Russian refugee. (Hell, it's pretty great even for an ex-Edmontonian.)

"In a strange way," Perelman says, "this project, *House of Sand and Fog*, was the same for me as the house was to Behrani. It was my great hope in a new country—hopefully with a better ending." ●

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG

Directed by Vadim Perelman • Written by Vadim Perelman and Shawn Otto • Starring Ben Kingsley, Jennifer Connelly, Ron Eldard and Shohreh Aghdashloo • Opens Fri, Dec 26

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21 GRAMS

STARTS DECEMBER 26TH! SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON • DIGITAL SOUND CHECK THEATRE DIRECTORY FOR SHOWTIMES

ODEON FILMS

Cold comfort

At least *Cold Mountain* is better than Hollywood's last shot at the Civil War

By BRIAN GIBSON

Back in February, an American Civil War epic as interminably drawn-out as the Battle of Gettysburg—and far more painful—was released. The nearly four-hour-long, Ted Turner-backed, star-spangled *Gods and Generals* was the second of a proposed trilogy and one of the worst films of the year, a wretched, sprawling army of celluloid that cornered me in the trenches of the multiplex.

My reviewer shell shock still lingers, and now here comes another 1860s battle epic, launched straight at moviegoers' frontlines by the Miramax forces. The Oscar-eager *Cold Mountain* clocks in at two-and-a-half hours, but its high-ranking cast and directorial pedigree shine through from the opening shots, a gut-wrench-

flit, when Northern soldiers have laid explosives under the Confederate Army's dugouts in Petersburg, Virginia. Battle-weary W. P. Inman (Jude Law, the director's favourite actor), hailing from the small North Carolina town of Cold Mountain, sits with his hometown friends, waiting for their next orders.

REVUE EPIC

ing immersion in the gritty horror of battle that does for the Civil War what the first 20 minutes of *Saving Private Ryan* did for World War II.

Directed by Anthony Minghella (*Truly Madly Deeply*, *The Talented Mr. Ripley*), the film opens in July 1864, with less than a year left in the con-

THE BLAST THAT COMES is appalling in its force, ripping clothes off men's backs and shredding flesh. Then the Northern soldiers attack in a chaotic swell, only to find themselves below steep dirt embankments running up to the South's trenches. The Confederate survivors of the explosion pick themselves up and, finding the enemy in a seething mass below, start firing into them. Inman jumps into the mud-soaked, gore-caked quagmire of bodies to rescue a boy-soldier and the camera flits from struggling man to trampled corpse. The maelstrom of blood, guts and filth is sickening, powerful cinema.

So it's no surprise that Inman, later injured during a raid, deserts the army in order to return home to his sweetheart, Ada Monroe (Nicole Kidman). The film flashes back to their first meeting, when the porcelain-pretty woman came to town with her reverend father (Donald

Sutherland) and was drawn to the Greek-god-handsome, quietly poised young man. The two repressed personalities seethe with passion, but Law and Kidman have enough chemistry to make their mystical attraction work (though by the end of the film they seem more like lovestruck, chiseled movie stars).

While the agriculturally incompetent Ada promises to wait for Inman, her farm falls to ruin, until lower-class Ruby Thewes (Renée Zellweger) shows up to tend the land. The man-depleted town is taken over by Teague (Ray Winstone), who lusts after Ada, wants all of his ancestors' town back in his hands and waits for any deserters to come home so that he can shoot them as traitors. Winstone does his best to temper and humanize the leering villain and every scene with Teague and his gang boils with menace.

COLD MOUNTAIN is so shot through with tragic overtones that you just know this bloody, brutal, sad work is not going to be all nicely tied up with one of Ada's bonnet strings. Inman's *Odyssey*-inspired trek home to his waiting Penelope takes him through sumptuous mountain vistas and includes a Circe-like old woman (Eileen Atkins) who rescues and nurs-


es him, a Calypso-like temptation, the form of war widow and single mother Sara (Natalie Portman), the threat of roaming and raiding Northern soldiers, and a lecherous preacher (Philip Seymour Hoffman).

But despite adroit turns from the strong cast and the supple camera work, *Cold Mountain* has its rocky spots. Apart from showing Ada and Inman acting kindly to black people, the film eludes racial issues. And crude class stereotype crops up when a farmer's wife and her sisters are depicted as sluttish, backwoods women. The dialogue isn't memorable, the ending is rushed and too neat, and the final character who pops up as a sappy "life goes on" symbol.

Still, Minghella crafts enough resonant, lyrical images to make the engrossing *Cold Mountain* a finely polished, emotionally harrowing epic. I don't care about its Oscar chances, though—I only hope that annihilates any chance that the third part of Ted Turner's Civil War mess will beg made. **C**

COLD MOUNTAIN

Written and directed by Anthony Minghella • Starring Jude Law, Nicole Kidman and Renée Zellweger • Opens Thu, Dec 11



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Mailing it in

Washed-up John Woo rubberstamps out *Paycheck*

By DARREN ZENKO

In the world of *Paycheck*—a world imagined by grade-A paranoid Philip K. Dick, apparently the only sci-fi writer Hollywood has heard of—megacorporations use memory-wiping technology to keep their R&D secrecy in top shape. Hotshot engineers like Ben Affleck are locked in secure labs for months, woodshedding away on some quasi-legal Project X, and when they come out all they have to show for their forgotten work is a fat paycheck and a headache. With no memories of workaday toil, life becomes, as Affleck puts it, "all highlights."

But this sweet deal goes sour for our reverse-engineer hero when he gets greedy and signs on for an unprecedented multi-year brain-blanking contract offered by business buddy Aaron Eckhart. Coming out of the lab with a three-year hole in his memory he discovers that, rather than the hundred million dollars' worth of Eckhart's stock he was expecting, his paycheck consists of an envelope packed with a handful of mundane pocket junk. When legions of cops and heavies start trying to kill/capture him, these knickknacks become

bizarrely providential tools and the keys to the mystery of fugitive Ben's lost years in the Science Bunker.

It's a pretty cool premise, but something fell off the truck between the strange vectors of Dick's warehouse mind and the Wal-Mart of Hollywood action thrillers. The *Paycheck* post-viewing experience is eerily similar to Affleck's amnesiac nightmare; the movie's so forgettable that it's literally un-memorable. You're waiting (for fucking ever) for a cab outside godforsaken North Edmonton Common, looking at the collection of items you somehow collected in your missing two hours: a

REVUE SCI-FI

ticket stub, a three-quarters empty cup of "Alan Smithee" coffee (the brew no one wants to take credit for) and a dozen pages of cryptic notations like "Affleck: lopsided smirk-snort." And you're wondering, *what exactly happened in that theatre?*

HERE'S THE PROBLEM. John Woo, his astounding Hong Kong films long behind him, is washed up. The director of *Paycheck* is some half-talented imitator who's somehow figured out, *Being John Malkovich*-style, how to take possession of John Woo's body and make crap films in his name. There are lots of Woo-like touches, many moments when you think

"Yeah, there's John Woo," and of course the requisite signature slow-mo flapping dove that's pretty much a joke by now. But it doesn't add to the Woo of my youth, or anything like a fresh movie experience. The mindfuck premise is betrayed, ignored far too often, used as a reason which to hang a bunch of off-the-shelf chases, been-there gunfights and boring "thriller" business.

Watching Affleck make use of the tools at hand to progress through clockwork Rube Goldberg universes like watching someone play through a old text-adventure game: You open the fuse box, exposing the train control circuitry. The train is approaching. INVENTORY. You are currently carrying: book of matches, lens, digital watch, paperclip, .45 cartridge, five o'clock shadow, silver dollar. USE MATCHES. You can't use them here. The train is approaching. USE PAPERCLIP. How will you use the paperclip? The train is approaching. USE PAPERCLIP ON FUSE BOX. You place the paperclip across a circuit jumper, but nothing happens. The train is approaching. RUN SOUTH.

You don't have to be a purist sci-fi geek to think *Paycheck* sucks, but it helps. **C**

PAYCHECK

Directed by John Woo
Written by Dean Georgaris • Starring Ben Affleck, Uma Thurman and Aaron Eckhart • Opens Thu, Dec 11

Carry that weight

Time twists and characters' lives interweave in heavy-hearted 21 Grams

BY BRIAN GIBSON

In the last 10 years, it seems that directors have become more obsessed with chronology, and not that clichéd, sci-fi time-travel way through 12 Monkeys and Donnie Darko each put a nice spin on that conceit). The year that Quentin Tarantino's interwoven three-part

Pulp Fiction came out, Milcho Manchevski's *Before the Rain* threw a twist into the same tripartite structure. And then, around the turn of the millennium, came Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's *Amores Perros*—a sort of canine Pulp Fiction set in Mexico City—as well as David Lynch's Moebius-strip *Mulholland Drive* and Christopher Nolan's *Memento*, a noirish thriller that revealed an amnesiac's lost memories by going back in time.

But if those films were the cinematic equivalent of Dalí's painting with the melting watches, **21 Grams**, Inarritu's powerful second film, is a Jackson Pollock splattering

of time all over the celluloid canvas. In this jigsaw of a movie, jagged flashbacks and flash-forwards slowly slip into place as the points of each scene reveal themselves to poignant effect. The plot, which hangs on events that might otherwise come off as standard clichés, is transformed by the fractured narrative into a moving, artful matrix of distantly connected decisions, interlaced themes and parallel images. While its structure avoids backstory and skims over some blips in credibility,

21 Grams takes a minimalist script and intensifies it with smart editing and powerful performances.

Inarritu's film essentially follows the strands of three characters whose

lives are knotted together by one tragic event, Paul Rivers (Sean Penn) is a mathematician suffering from a critical illness and his faltering relationship with an English émigré, Mary (Charlotte Gainsbourg). Christina Peck (Naomi Watts) is a housewife who lives in the suburbs with her architect husband Michael

(Danny Huston) and their two daughters. Jack Jordan (Benicio Del Toro) is an ex-convict and born-again Christian who's trying to settle back into his life with wife Marianne (Melissa Leo) and their kids.

NONE OF THIS is clear from the outset of Guillermo Arriaga's deftly penned plot, though. Even the summary in the preceding paragraph is a bit of a spoiler, in fact, as the timeline of characters' relationships doesn't become clear until the film is halfway over. The first scenes are a percolation of future, quieter moments that only make emotional sense as the story unravels. So we see Paul smoking reflectively as he sits by a sleeping Christina, although we don't yet know how they've met. Soon there's Paul by himself, on an emergency bed. And then Christina snorting cocaine. Meanwhile, Jack is trying to encourage a juvenile delinquent not to reoffend by telling him to believe in the Bible as strongly as he does—“God even knows when a single hair moves on your head,” he tells him with a glare of conviction.

But as the crystal-clear glimpses and instants slot into place, **21 Grams'** razor-sharp narrative reveals its themes: guilt, atonement, redemption and sacrifice. After the film's key event shatters the three figures' lives, Paul becomes willing to give up Mary for the sake of a perverse, personal quest, Christina comes unstuck and fixated on revenge and the once Biblically-literate Jack, shredded by guilt, grows bit-

terly suspicious of God's protection. Although the refracting, non-linear narrative can't build up to moments of drama or fully develop characters, the actors have plenty of scenes in which to convey the intensity of their roles. In just two scenes, the raw emotion between Paul and Christina is vividly rendered. Del Toro reveals the inner struggle of the outwardly hard, seething ex-con—there's a disturbing scene where he teaches his daughter to “turn the other cheek” after her brother hits her on the right arm by letting her brother hit her on the other arm. Penn uses his hard-jawed, soft-eyed features to great effect, playing the sickly Paul as a soulful but stubborn man. And Watts gives a scene-stealing performance, her puffy face, hollowed eye sockets and pale cheeks add to her howling moments of grief and anger.

The closing montage is a quiet distillation of all that's come before, the slow-motion views of Paul, Christina and Jack taking on added resonance now that we know their fates. Watch for the final shot, too, of a winter landscape, after a musing voice-over that elegantly explains the film's title. In the heavenly whiteness drifting down upon an empty pool, there's a yawning absence whose meaning you're left to ponder, but there's also a lyrical suggestion of life yet to be fulfilled. ●

21 GRAMS

Directed by Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu
• Written by Guillermo Arriaga
• Starring Sean Penn, Naomi Watts and Benicio Del Toro • Opens Fri, Dec 26

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NEW THIS WEEK

House of Sand and Fog (CO) Ben Kingsley, Jennifer Connelly, Ron Eldard and Shohreh Aghdashloo star in director Vadim Perelman's moody adaptation of Andre Dubus III's novel about a recovering alcoholic and an Iranian ex-colonel whose battle for the ownership of a house leads inexorably to tragedy. (Opens Fri, Dec 26)

21 Grams (CO) Sean Penn, Naomi Watts, Benicio Del Toro and Melissa Leo star in Amores Perros director Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu's intense, chronologically scrambled drama about three people whose lives are bound together by a sudden, inexplicable tragedy. (Opens Fri, Dec 26)

FIRST-RUN MOVIES

Bad Santa (CO) Billy Bob Thornton, Tony Cox, Bernie Mac and Lauren Graham star in Ghost World director Terry Zwigoff's ultra-cynical Yuletide comedy about an alcoholic, down-at-the-heel thief who plans to rob a department store while working as a mall Santa, only to have his conscience pricked when he befriends a lonely eight-year-old boy.

The Barbarian Invasions (P) Rémy Girard, Marie-Josée Croze and Stéphane Rousseau star in writer/director Denys Arcand's sequel to his 1986 arthouse hit *The Decline of the American Empire*, in which an aging, philandering academic makes peace with his son and his old circle of friends, colleagues and lovers before dying of cancer. In French with English subtitles

Blizzard (CO, FP) Brenda Blethyn, Christopher Plummer and the voice of Whoopi Goldberg are featured in director Levat Burton's Christmas-themed family fantasy about a young ice skater who befriends a magical reindeer

Cheaper by the Dozen (CO, FP, L) Steve Martin, Bonnie Hunt, Hilary Duff and Piper Perabo star in *Big Fat Liar* director Shawn Levy's domestic comedy about a spectacularly fertile small-town football coach with 12 children whose home life becomes even more chaotic than usual when he takes a job at Chicago's Northwestern University.

Cold Mountain (CO, FP) Jude Law, Nicole Kidman, Renée Zellweger, Kathy Baker, Philip Seymour Hoffman and Natalie Portman star in *The English Patient* director Anthony Minghella's epic, episodic film version of Charles Fra-

zier's novel about a Civil War deserter and his grueling trek back home to the new bride he left behind in North Carolina.

Dr. Seuss' The Cat in the Hat (CO, FP) Mike Myers, Alec Baldwin, Kelly Preston and Dakota Fanning star in director Bo Welch's film version of the classic children's book about a boisterous feline who pays an unwitting visit on two kids while their mother is gone, and gleefully sets to work destroying their house.

Elf (CO, FP, L) Will Ferrell, James Caan and Zoëy Deschanel star in *Swingers* director Jon Favreau's fish-out-of-water holiday comedy about a human man who was raised as an elf at the North Pole and who now travels to New York City hoping to locate his biological father.

Gothika (CO, FP) Halle Berry, Penélope Cruz and Robert Downey Jr. star in *The Crimson Rivers* director Mathieu Kassovitz's supernatural thriller about a criminal psychologist who wakes up confined in a mental institution for the murder of her husband, a crime she has absolutely no memory of committing.

The Haunted Mansion (FP) Eddie Murphy, Terence Stamp, Marsha Thomason and Jennifer Tilly star in *Stuart Little* director Rob Minkoff's effects-heavy comedy, based on the Disney theme park attraction, about a family that encounters all manner of ghosts and poltergeists during a visit to a haunted house.

Honey (CO) Jessica Alba, Mekhi Phifer, Lil' Romeo and Joy Bryant star in director Billie Woodruff's gotta-dream musical drama about a gutsy young dancer from the wrong side of the tracks whose blossoming career as a music video choreographer is threatened by her sexually predatory mentor.

In America (CO) Paddy Considine, Samantha Morton and Djimon Hounsou star in *My Left Foot* director Jim Sheridan's emotional, autobiographical film about a bereaved Irish family struggling to survive in a rundown New York City apartment while the father pursues an acting career.

The Last Samurai (CO, FP, L) Tom Cruise, Ken Watanabe, Billy Connolly and Timothy Spall star in *Glory* director Edward Zwick's historical epic about an alcoholic Civil War veteran who travels to Japan to train and modernize the emperor's troops, but decides to switch sides after being exposed to the honour code of the samurai warriors the emperor is determined to wipe out.

Line of Control (GA, FP) Sanjay Dutt, Ajay Devgan and Abhishek Bachchan star in director J.P. Dutta's patriotic war epic about the protracted 1999 Battle of Kargil, during which 450 Indian soldiers died fighting Pakistani forces on the icy peaks above Jammu

and Kashmir. In Hindi with English subtitles.

Looney Tunes: Back in Action (FP) Brendan Fraser and Jenna Elfman star alongside dozens of beloved Warner Brothers cartoon characters in *Grenlins* director Joe Dante's globe-hopping blend of animation and live action, in which Bugs Bunny hooks up with a former Hollywood stuntman to track down a legendary lost gemstone.

The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King (CO, FP, L) Elijah Wood, Ian McKellen, Viggo Mortensen and Liv Ullmann star in the long-awaited concluding chapter of director Peter Jackson's epic film adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's trilogy of fantasy novels about a band of hobbits, trolls, elves, wizards and humans who embark on a quest to destroy an evil, all-powerful ring.

Love Actually (CO) Hugh Grant, Liam Neeson, Emma Thompson, Alan Rickman, Keira Knightley, Colin Firth and Laura Linney star in writer/director Richard Curtis's all-star ensemble romantic comedy, which tells eight interlocking stories about various Londoners (including the prime minister of England) falling in and out of love during the Christmas season.

Master and Commander: The Far Side of the World (CO) Russell Crowe and Paul Bettany star in *Witness* director Peter Weir's waterlogged adventure yarn, based on the novels of Patrick O'Brian, in which 19th-century British sea captain Jack Aubrey and ship surgeon Stephen Maturin brave storms and cannon-fire as they pursue a French "super-frigate" from Cape Horn to the Galapagos Islands.

The Matrix: Revolutions (FP) Keanu Reeves, Carrie-Anne Moss, Laurence Fishburne and Hugo Weaving star in the final installment of directors Andy and Larry Wachowski's groundbreaking sci-fi trilogy about a rebel army's life-or-death battle against the machines that have enslaved most of mankind within a computer-generated virtual world.

Mona Lisa Smile (CO, FP) Julia Roberts, Julia Stiles, Kirsten Dunst and Maggie Gyllenhaal star in *Four Weddings and a Funeral* director Mike Newell's drama, set in 1953 at Wellesley women's college, about a rebellious teacher who makes it her mission to ensure her students aspire to be more than socialites, hostesses and housewives.

Mystic River (FP) Sean Penn, Kevin Bacon and Tim Robbins star in *Unforgotten* director Clint Eastwood's moody drama, set in working-class Boston, about three childhood friends whose trau-



From *Parenthood* to the *Father of the Bride* franchise to being a father of 12 in *Chances by the Dozen*—poor Steve Martin—we hardly knew ya. In this new remake of a 1950 classic (classic bore, some critics say), Martin plays the patriarch of the Baker family, who move to a new house in the Chicago suburbs so pop can start his dream job as a ball coach. At least the original was based on the real-life story—an interesting story. The current family even dares using the kids as guinea pigs. Here it's viewers who are caged rats for another Hollywood feel-good morality tale. But Ashton-Kutcher's appearance as the eldest Baker girl's boytoy might appeal to some of you. If not, what then maybe Tom Cochrane's "Life Is a Highway" as the soundtrack? Anyone? Anyone?

matic memories of the past are revived when one, now a police detective, begins to suspect another of killing the third's daughter. Based on the novel by Dennis Lehane.

Paycheck (CO, FP) Ben Affleck, Uma Thurman, Aaron Eckhart and Colm Feore star in *Face/Off* director John Woo's sci-fi action picture about an electrical engineer who must piece together the last two years of his life after his memory is erased by the sinister company that has employed him on a top-secret project. Based on the short story by Philip K. Dick.

Peter Pan (CO, FP) Jeremy Sumpter, Jason Isaacs, Rachel Hurd-Wood and Ludvine Sagnier star in *My Best Friend's Wedding* director P.J. Hogan's film version of James Barrie's beloved children's book about three London children who travel to the mythical world of Neverland, where a gang of unaging boys do battle with a band of ruthless pirates.

Pieces of April (P) Katie Holmes, Patricia Clarkson, Oliver Platt and Sean Hayes star in director Peter Hedges's bittersweet comedy about a young bohemian woman whose plans to invite her estranged suburban parents to her Lower East Side apartment in New York for Thanksgiving go horribly awry.

Something's Gotta Give (CO, FP, L) Jack Nicholson, Diane Keaton, Keanu Reeves and Amanda Peet star in *What Women Want* director Nancy Meyers's romantic comedy

about a middle-aged rascal who re-evaluates his lifelong preference for dating much younger women when he finds himself falling in love with the middle-aged mother of his latest trophy girlfriend.

Stuck on You (CO, FP) Matt Damon, Greg Kinnear, Cher and Eric Mendez star in *There's Something About Mary* director Peter and Bob Farrelly's wacky comedy about a pair of Siamese twins whose close relationship is threatened when one of the brothers decides to go to Hollywood and pursue his dream of becoming an actor.

Timeline (CO) Paul Walker, Frances O'Connor, Gerard Butler and Billy Connolly star in *Ladyhawke* director Richard Donner's adventure yarn about three Yale students who must travel back in time to 14th-century France to rescue a trapped history professor and return him to the present. Based on the novel by Michael Crichton.

LEGEND

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Daily 7:15 9:15

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LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Daily 10:45

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
Daily 7:10 9:40
Sat/Sun 1:00 3:40

BROTHER BEAR
Daily 1:10

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory scenes
Daily 10:10

ELF
Daily 1:20 3:30

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
Daily 1:10 3:35 7:10 9:15

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111-200-300

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Daily 1:30 6:00 10:00

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory scenes, Daily 1:40

PETER PAN
Daily 1:10 3:30 7:20

MONA LISA SMILE
Daily 1:00 7:10 9:30

BROTHER BEAR
Daily 3:20

CINEPLEX ODEON CINEMAS

CINEMA GUIDE

CITY CENTRE

10000-102 Ave. 421-0000

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory scenes
Daily 11:45 3:30 6:30 9:45

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Violence, frightening scenes
No passes
Fri/Wed 12:00 4:30 6:20 9:00
Thu 12:00 4:30 9:00

STUCK ON YOU
Coarse language
Fri/Wed 12:40 3:40 10:25

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
No passes
Daily 12:15 3:20 7:35 10:30

MONA LISA SMILE
No passes
Daily 12:30 3:50 7:15 10:20

PETER PAN
Daily 1:10 4:15 7:20 10:00

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
No passes
Daily 12:50 3:30 6:50 9:15

COLD MOUNTAIN
Daily 11:50 3:10 6:40 10:10

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG
Disturbing content
No passes
Daily 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:50

CALENDAR GIRLS
Daily 12:40 3:40 7:10 10:15

WEST MALL 8

10911-171 St. 444-1800

MYSTIC RIVER
Coarse language
Fri-Sun 2:30 6:30 9:20
Mon-Thu 6:30 9:20

SCARY MOVIE 3
Crude content
Fri-Sun 2:20 4:40 6:55 9:00
Mon-Thu 4:40 6:55 9:00

KILL BILL: VOLUME I
Gory violence
Fri-Sun 2:00 9:10
Mon-Thu 9:10

UNDER THE TUSCAN SUN
Not suitable for younger children
Daily 4:25 6:45

THE MATRIX REVOLUTIONS
Violence
Fri-Sun 1:40 4:20 7:00 9:40
Mon-Thu 2:00 7:00 9:40

LOST IN TRANSLATION
Fri-Sun 1:50 4:30 7:10 9:35
Mon-Thu 4:00 7:10 9:35

GOTHIKA
Violence, disturbing content
Fri-Sun 2:00 4:15 7:20 9:45
Mon-Thu 4:15 7:20 9:45

HONEY
Fri-Sun 2:10 4:30 6:40 8:55
Mon-Thu 4:30 6:40 8:55

CLAREVIEW

4211-139 Ave. 472-7600

ELF
Daily 11:50

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory scenes, Daily 12:10 3:30 6:40 9:40

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Violence, frightening scenes
No passes
Daily 12:00 2:30 4:30 7:30 8:45

STUCK ON YOU
Coarse language
Daily 1:20 4:20 7:40 10:10

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
No passes
Daily 1:10 4:00 6:50 9:50

MONA LISA SMILE
No passes
Daily 12:50 3:40 6:40 9:20

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
No passes
Daily 1:40 4:50 7:20 9:45

COLD MOUNTAIN
Daily 12:05 3:10 6:45 10:00

PAYCHECK
Violence
Daily 1:30 4:40 7:50 10:20

PETER PAN
Daily 12:30 3:00 7:00 9:30

SOUTH EDMONTON COMMON

1400-10 St. 436-3300

ELF
Crude sexual content throughout, not recommended for children
Daily 10:40

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT
Daily 11:30 1:30

LOVE ACTUALLY
Sexual content
Fri-Wed 12:40 7:20

MASTER AND COMMANDER: THE FAR SIDE OF THE WORLD
Violence
Fri/Wed 3:45 10:15 Thu 10:15

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory scenes
Daily 1:30 5:00 8:30

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
No passes
Daily 12:30 3:20 6:45 9:40

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Violence, frightening scenes
No passes
Daily 12:00 1:00 2:00 3:00 3:30 4:30 5:30 6:30 7:30 8:00 9:00 10:00 10:45

STUCK ON YOU

Coarse language
Fri-Wed 1:50 4:40 7:45 10:30
Thu 1:50 4:40 7:45

MONA LISA SMILE
No passes
Daily 12:50 3:50 7:00 9:50

IN AMERICA
Mature theme
Daily 1:20 4:00 6:30 9:15

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
No passes
Daily 11:40 2:10 4:45 7:10 9:30

PETER PAN
Thu 1:10 4:10 6:50 9:20

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG
Disturbing content
No passes
Daily 12:10 3:10 6:40 9:45

21 GRAMS
Daily 12:20 4:20 7:40 10:20

CALENDAR GIRLS
Nudity
Thu 1:40 4:15 7:20 10:10

WEST MALL 8

10911-171 St. 444-1800

THE ROUNDUP
Daily 4:15 7:00 9:15

TUPAC RESURRECTION
Coarse language
Daily 4:45 7:15 9:50

BROTHER BEAR
Daily 3:45 6:40 8:50

THE SCHOOL OF ROCK
Daily 4:00 7:30 9:40

ELF
Daily 3:40 6:50 9:30

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION
Daily 3:30 6:30 9:00

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT
Daily 12:10 3:35

ELF
Daily 12:40 6:55

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory scenes
Fri-Tue/Thu 6:45 9:45
Wed 6:45

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
Fri-Tue/Thu 12:50 3:30 6:40 9:30
Wed 12:50 3:30 6:40

STUCK ON YOU
Coarse language
Fri-Tue/Thu 3:50 9:35
Wed 3:50

BLUZZARD
Daily 11:45

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Violence, frightening scenes
No passes
Fri-Tue/Thu 11:30 3:45 4:15 6:00 8:30
Wed 2:00 4:15 6:00

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
Fri-Tue/Thu 1:20 3:15 7:05 9:20
Wed 1:20 3:15 7:05

COLD MOUNTAIN
Fri-Tue/Thu 1:30 4:30 7:10 10:00
Wed 1:30 4:30 7:10

PETER PAN
Fri-Tue/Thu 12:05 3:20 6:30 9:25
Wed 12:05 3:20 6:30

PAYCHECK
Fri-Tue/Thu 12:55 3:40 6:35 9:50
Wed 12:55 3:40 6:35

MONA LISA SMILE
Fri-Tue/Thu 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:40
Wed 1:00 4:00 7:00

NORTH EDMONTON CINEMAS

1401-171 Ave. 102-2200

ELF
Daily 1:00 3:20 5:30 7:45

THE LAST SAMURAI
Gory violence
Daily 12:10 4:00 7:15 10:20

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
No passes
Daily 1:40 4:20 7:00 9:50

PG BLUZZARD

12:45 4:20 6:50 9:20

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Violence, frightening scenes
Fri/Wed 11:45 3:40 7:20 10:4

MONA LISA SMILE
No passes
Daily 1:20 4:10 7:40 10:15

CHEAPER BY THE DOZEN
No passes
Daily 12:40 3:30 6:50 9:30

PAYCHECK
Violence
Daily 1:50 4:50 7:50 10:45

PETER PAN
Daily 12:50 3:25 7:10 9:45

COLD MOUNTAIN
Daily 11:45 3:15 6:40 9:55

HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG
Disturbing content
No passes
Daily 1:10 4:40 7:20 10:05

CALENDAR GIRLS
Nudity
Thu 12:20 3:20 7:30 10:00

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12:45 4:20 6:50 9:20

DR. SEUSS' THE CAT IN THE HAT
11:40

WESTMOUNT CENTRE

111 Ave. 433-0778

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
Daily 12:30 3:30

LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
Violence, frightening scenes
No passes
Daily 12:45 4:00 7:15 10:0

MONA LISA SMILE
Daily 12:45 4:00 7:15 10:0

PAYCHECK
Violence
Daily 1:40 4:50 7:50 10:45

SOMETHING'S GOTTA GIVE
Coarse language, sexual content
No passes
Daily 12:45 4:00 7:15 10:0

SCARY MOVIES

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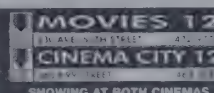
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SHOWING AT BOTH CINEMAS

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340 bottles of art on the wall

All of life's fluids are vital to Laura Kozak

By AGNIESZKA MATEJKO

Seeing Laura Kozak's show *Box Social* can be an embarrassing experience. I meandered through the crowded Muddy Waters Café trying to unobtrusively scrutinize artwork suspended over the coffee cups of customers. Kozak's mixed media objects looked unremarkable. There were cardboard boxes loosely attached to the walls, an unappetizing old banana in a box, a notepad that looked like a castoff from a garage sale, and long sets of little bottles filled with nondescript objects. But as the titles began to illuminate this clever and quirky show, I suddenly burst out laughing right over the heads of the hapless customers. Seeing my amusement, a total stranger got up to look at the art and she too began to laugh. By then, my dignified professional demeanour was gone and I could sense all eyes pinned to my back as I slinked out of the café.

"What's so funny about bottles and old cardboard boxes?" you may ask. Let me start at the beginning. It all began two years ago when Kozak packed all her stuff and moved to Vancouver to study at the Emily Carr Institute of Art and Design. Just as she was getting comfortable, Kozak was assigned a work experience stint at an Edmonton gallery. She packed all over again. This shuffling of countless things around and trying to find things among stacks of boxes was getting to her. So she decided to minimize the problem without getting rid of her cherished stuff altogether. "I decided to

compress it," explains Kozak, who went to a farm loaded down with a 60-cubic-foot pile of her clothes. Once she arrived, she threw the pile into a bailer and out came a neatly pressed 160-pound bale of solid clothes. "It became a heavy block that you can't access, but it's really easy to move around," she laughs. She then carried her two-by-three foot bale to a storage unit. "There were endless compartments of stuff that people have forgotten," observed Kozak. "They keep it, but they have forgotten that it's even there."

PREVIEW VISUAL ARTS

"What is our relationship as people to the things of this world?" Kozak began to wonder, so she proceeded to fill 340 little bottles with samples of everything she owned. "Now all of my stuff either has something cut out of it or is in a bale," she laughs. She placed the bottles neatly in rows like colourful butterflies behind glass. "Everything I Own" became an unsentimental archive," explains Kozak as she skillfully evades any hint of preachy commentary on consumerism. "[Consumerism] is a big problem, but it's a very human thing to do. I try not to acquire too much stuff, but I am still deeply attached to it. I am not opposed to shopping. I am not trying to get people to stop—just to examine why we need to shop so much."

IN HER PIECE "31 things 'to do' in order to be a more accomplished person," Kozak pokes fun our worst fear: the dread of being caught doing nothing. "People get really embarrassed about doing things that are not productive," she says.

"You would never tell anybody that you spent your afternoon putting grape juice through a water filter. But it's delightful when people off this track of getting things done." To ensure that our unproductive moments get their due, Kozak created an "anti" to-do list, complete with a box for checking off accomplishments. Her list includes:

- Draw a salmon on everything you own
- Stop bending your knees
- Finish every conversation with an apology
- Attach a tennis ball to the soles of your shoes
- Find out how many toilets there are at the Frankfurt airport

When the list is completed, Kozak has generously provided a prize. You can open a lever and get a gold star or a candy.

Old bottles and cardboard boxes are the major source of inspiration for artists in history books; they peddle bigger themes: sex, war and pretty flowers. But Kozak's art is life's gritty detail. "The same way that materials come out of every day, so do ideas," she says. "There is a lot of humour the every day, in observation of people. There is humour in almost embarrassing things, looking at your legs in the mirror, or singing in the shower. When they are pointed out to people, then they say 'I like to do that!'" For Kozak those clandestine little quirks of being human are the stuff her art is made of. View through her sympathetic eye, we can't help but laugh along with her. ●

BOX SOC

By Laura Kozak • Muddy Waters (8111 St.) • To Jo

O Canada, O brother

Steve-O wants to break laws this side of the border now

By JAMES ELFORD

Most normal people would probably be a little more careful after narrowly avoiding an eight-year jail sentence. But Steve-O (a.k.a. Stephen Glover) isn't normal. In fact, he might not even qualify as abnormal.

Despite having felony obscenity charges laid against him for stapling his nuts to his leg, the self-styled extreme performance artist and *Jackass* alum has shrewdly (or perhaps moronically) decided to exploit his brush with incarceration for all it's worth. Not only did he name his most recent DVD *The Steve-O Video Vol. III: Out on Bail*, but he's also decided that being arrested is hilarious. So hilarious that even with the taste of jail fresh in his mouth Steve-O is going back for seconds... and thirds... and fourths.

"When does this rag come out?" asks the constantly laughing and joking self-abuse comic, "because I think it would be interesting if they knew I was trying to get arrested by those funny looking Canadian police officers."

Getting arrested in Canada is just

one of the things Steve-O will be trying to do as he brings his roving collection of stunt-performing fools and freaks with him across Canada on his "Don't Try This at Home Tour." The great white north will finally get to enjoy such "stunts" as someone clotheslining themselves against a stick and fans giving themselves bloody noses. Like everything else Steve-O does, the tour will be taped for both posterity and future DVD sales. For example, *Out on Bail* contains such cinematic nuggets as his tour manager trying desperately to

PREVIEW VULGARITY

get arrested for public drunkenness, as well as the normal on-stage stunts like Steve-O stapling his testicles to his leg. If this show is anything like Steve-O's DVD, expect a freak/sideshow for people with ADD performed by people who may or may not be crazy, stupid, or crazy and stupid. Truthfully, the only thing that makes these guys professionals is that they're not being dead.

"I KIND OF WANT to devote a show to just getting arrested," Steve-O says excitedly, explaining that he wants to skirt the law with stunts like walking down the street snorting powdered sugar blatantly and trying to get arrested for snorting cocaine.

Aside from the DVD, the tour and finding new ways to further obscure the line between brilliant stupidity and just plain stupid, Steve-O has found even more ways to keep busy between smoking joints. He's recently returned from the wilds of Brazil, where he toiled away on a nature-exploitation show with fellow *Jackass* alum Chris Pontius for MTV called *Wildboyz*. The show has a simple premise: Steve-O and Chris go to exotic locales to experience the tapestry of human cultures and "get attacked by animals." Take that, Crocodile Hunter.

It shouldn't be surprising, then, that someone who has made a cottage industry out of self-abuse wants as much exposure as he can get. "Did it have the scene where I got choked unconscious?" Steve-O asks about his DVD. It did, as well as the five or six other times it happens, complete with involuntary muscle twitching. "Sweet," says Steve-O. "That's so good to know that Canada's not censoring my videos. Half the retailers refuse to run so much shit."

"That's my goal with the DVDs," he explains, "to make sure nothing on them is allowed on television and to make the world a filthier, sillier place. It's fortunate that *Jackass* came along, but I was gonna get on TV no matter what. My whole life has been devoted to being remembered for a

long time. Whatever you do, it doesn't really matter how good you are at it if nobody knows you're doing it."

SO HOW DOES the man who has dedicated his life to gaining fame see Canada helping that cause? "I feel like I'm pretty unaccountable for anything I say or do in Canada, so we're gonna have a good time," Steve-O laughs. "The good news is that I haven't done a show since I think July. I've had months and months and months to heal so I'm ready to go hard." Steve-O says his new act, the "king of electricity," will involve hitting himself with a taser while shaking the hands of volunteers from the audience.

These days, getting herpes scares Steve-O more than anything, so he's going to the doctor often. "You know, the physician really freaked out when I told him I stapled my scrotum to my leg regularly," he says. "I showed him my cock and balls and he said it looks great. I know I can't live forever but I'm surprised that I'm in such good health."



Having enjoyed a little bit of success, it would sure be a drag to get her right now."

Oh yeah. One more thing. Steve-O really wants everyone to know that his cameraman Mark Rackley ate out a Brazilian hooker's ass while they were in Brazil. "I want that in the media," he exclaims. "Mark Rackley. R-A-C-K-L-E-Y." ●

STEVE

The Joint • Sun, Dec

ARTS WEEKLY

For free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail to listings@vucb.ca. Deadline is Friday

GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

WAB STUDIO GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

ARTS VISUELS DE L'ALBERTA 35 Ave (461-3427) • Group show featuring works by members of the Centre • Until Feb. 4

BERGSTROM'S RED GALLERY 9621-439-8210 • Open Mon-Fri 11am-5pm • *TO UNDERSTANDING*: Portraits by Bergstrom; until March • *THE DEAD DOG* (series): Paintings by Christ Bergstrom; until January

CHONTON ART GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

MISSION CENTRE GALLERY 2nd Fl. City Extension Centre, 8303-112 St (492-4555) • Open Mon-Thu 8:30am-8pm; Fri 10am-4pm; Sat 9am-noon • Artworks by visiting students; until Jan. 21

DOOR 10308-81 Ave (432-7535) • Open Wed 10am-6pm; Thu-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 10am-5pm; Sun 12:30pm • Eskimo soapstone (ukshuk, bears) by J. Papigaitok; West Indian and Eskimo silver and gold jewellery • Until Dec. 30

DOOR GALLERY Bsm 10516 Whyte Ave (432-962-9505) • Open Mon-Sat 9:30am-6pm • *FROM CLASSIC TO CONTEMPORARY*: Works by Pearl Schreiner, Dawn McLean, Anne Nallewein, Mary Wright, Sidsel Naess, Neil Fierlert, Richard Toszczak; until Dec. 23 • *UNFINISHED VERSE*: Paintings by Paddy Jan; until Jan. 23

DOOR DE JONGE 27022A Hwy 16A, Spruce (962-9505) • Open Tue-Fri 11:30am-5pm • *Appointment*: Work by local artists Beth, Carl Cummins, Henry de Jager and Mary

DOOR GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

COURT HOUSE 10215-112 St (426-4180) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-5pm; Sat 12-4pm • *ANY* (series): A retrospective of Violet Owen's

artworks • Jan. 8-Feb. 7 • Opening reception: Jan. 8 (7:30-10pm)

JEFF ALLEN GALLERY Strathcona Place, 10831 University Ave (433-5807) • Open: Mon-Fri 9am-4pm • *CHRISTMAS SHOW AND SALE*: Group show • Until Jan. 29

LATITUDE 53 See What's Happening Downtown

MCNULLEN GALLERY U of A Hospital, East Entrance, 8440-112 St (407-7152) • Open Mon-Fri 10am-8pm; Sat-Sun 1-8pm • *THE BED SHOW*: Handcrafted beds and furniture created by Susan Owen Kagan and Ken Mackinnon. In support of the Artists on the Wards program • Until Jan. 18

MCNULLEN GALLERY 5411-51 St, Stony Plain (963-2777) • Open 10am-4pm • *SKY FORMS*: SEA AND PRAIRIE: Artworks by Dave Moore; until Jan. 5 • *SYSTEME*: Multimedia works that explore unique systems in conjunction with *La Fête des Toilettes*; Jan. 8-Mar. 5

MULTICULTURAL HERITAGE CENTRE 5411-51 St, Stony Plain • *OFFERINGS*: Artworks by Fiona Connell • Opening reception: Jan. 9 (7pm); Cabin Fever concert with John Gandi on acoustic guitar and cello (8pm) • \$6

MUSÉE HÉRITAGE MUSEUM 5 St. Anne Street, St. Albert (459-1528) • *SITTING PRETTY—LA FÊTE DES TOILETTES* • Until Feb. 6

NKKA HAGGERTY CENTRE FOR THE ARTS 9702-111 Ave (488-0255) • *DECK THE WALLS*: Artworks by adults with developmental disabilities

PROVINCIAL MUSEUM OF ALBERTA 12845-102 Ave (453-9100) • Open: Sat-Thu 9am-5pm, Fri 9am-9pm • *TEDDY BEARS ARE BACK*: Until Feb. 16 • *FORGED IN FIRE: 19TH CENTURY FURNITURE IN ALBERTA*: Until Jan. 11 • *BIG THINGS 2*: Featuring large-scale sculptures by the artists of the North Edmonton Sculpture Workshop; until Apr. 30, 2004 • *THE ROOKIE*: Photographs of Wayne Gredzky; until Jan. 14 • *SYNCRUDE CANADA ABO-ORIGINAL PEOPLES GALLERY*: Spans 11,000 years and 500 generations, people of the past and present, recordings, film, lights, artifacts and more. Permanent exhibit • *THE NATURAL HISTORY GALLERY*: • *BUG ROOM*: Live invertebrate display. Permanent exhibit • *THE BIRD GALLERY*: Mounted birds. Permanent exhibit • *TREASURES OF THE EARTH*: Geology collection. Permanent exhibit • *WILD ALBERTA GALLERY*: Permanent exhibit • *A TO Z AT THE MUSEUM*: Every Sat (9am-11am):

Taurus. Experiment with creating rich new meanings of the term "labour of love."

GEMINI May 21 - June 20

One way or another, you'll be coming home in 2004, Gemini. Maybe you'll finally locate the sanctuary that brings out the best in you—the power spot where you feel pure and real and true. Maybe you'll create the community you've always dreamed of or else join a network that connects you to resources that have always been off-limits. Perhaps you'll go explore the land where your ancestors lived and died for many generations, or maybe you'll make a pilgrimage to a storied place that holds the key to a mystery you desperately need to clarify. And maybe you'll do all of the above.

CANCER June 21 - July 22

"The great lesson from the true mystics is that the sacred is in the ordinary, that it is to be found in one's daily life, in one's neighbors, friends, and family, in one's back yard." So said psychologist Abraham Maslow. Of course that's always true, but in 2004 it will be far truer for you than ever before. You won't have to travel to exotic paradises to drum up life-changing epiphanies, Cancerian. You won't have to hunt for miracles in all-night revels at the edge of reality. All the amazement you'll need will glide right up to you while you're washing dishes or taking a walk or buying peanut butter.

LEO July 23 - Aug 22

Using FBI crime data, a research company determined that Amherst, New York is the safest city in America, followed by Brick Township, New Jersey and Mission Viejo, California. My analysis of the astrological data for 2004 suggests that your sign, Leo, will be safest in all the zodiac. You're

family-fun drop-in program

REMEDY 8631-109 St • *THINGS ON WALLS* Paintings by Christie Schultz, photographs by Vanessa Yaremchuk • Until Dec. 31

ROWLEY AND COMPANY See What's Happening Downtown

SCOTT GALLERY 10411-124 St (488-3619) • Open Tue-Sat 10am-5pm • *CHRISTMAS TREASURES*: New artworks by Lynn Malin, Phyllis Anderson, Jim Stokes, David Moore, Angelique Gillespie and others • Until December

SECHERS STUDIO GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

SNAP GALLERY See What's Happening Downtown

SNOWBIRD GALLERY WEM, 8882-170 St (444-1024) • Work by J. Yardley-Jones and Gregg Johnson, acrylics by Jim Vest, pottery by Noburo Kuro and Jacqueline Steinberg

SPECTRUM ART GALLERY AND STUDIO 11745 Jasper Ave (482-6677) • Open daily 10am-6pm • Paintings by Christopher Lucas, Patricia Young, Bridgit Turner, Deanna Larson and David Phillips

VAAA GALLERY 3rd Fl. Harcourt House, 10215-112 St (421-1731) • *GALA*: Her Form: Photography, sculpture and paintings of the female form by Robert Todnick, Alan Henderson, and Sharon Moore-Foster • Jan. 8-Feb. 7 • Opening reception: Jan. 8 (7:30-9:30pm)

LITERARY

AUDREYS BOOKS See What's Happening Downtown

STANLEY & MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE See What's Happening Downtown

CHAPTERS WEM (444-2555) • Zhana Alexander signing copies of her novel *Love Is an Octopus* • Dec. 27 (12-4pm)

THE 12 DAYS OF POETRY • O'Byrne's, 10616-82 Ave, Jan. 6, Jan. 7 (8pm) • Steeps, College Plaza, 1116-82 Ave, Jan. 9 (7pm) • Whitened Crossing Library, Whitened Shopping Ctr, 145, 4211-106 St, Jan. 11 (2pm) • Stanley Milner Library, 7 St Winston Churchill Sq, Tue, Jan. 13 (7pm) • Hellenic Hall, 10450-116 St, Grande Alliance: Featuring eleven poets, tribute to Robbie Burns by Tim Cusack; Raoul Brothers; Sat, Jan. 24 (7pm); \$10 (adv)/\$12 (door); tickets available at Greenwood's Bookshoppe, Volume II Books

VIRGO Aug 23 - Sept 22

Some of the finest minds I've ever known have belonged to Virgos. I've benefited greatly from your tribe's analytical power. Though my gig as an astrology columnist may suggest I favour magical thinking over the logical kind, I am in fact a great admirer of the scientific method and objective reasoning. Having said all that, I can in good conscience tell you to trust your passion way more than usual in 2004. Cut out this quote from Ray Bradbury and carry it in your wallet: "If we listened only to our intellect, we'd never have a love affair or friendship. We'd never go into business. Well, that's nonsense. Sometimes you've got to jump off cliffs and grow your wings on the way down."

LIBRA Sept 23 - Oct 22

Amazon.com has begun to do with books what Napster did to music: give them away free online. Along with 120,000 other books, you can now read the entire text of my memoir, *The Televisionary Oracle*, without buying it. My first reaction to this was a clenched "Aaargggghhh! My beloved creation, which I slaved over for years, will no longer generate any income!" Soon I moved to a new attitude of Buddhist-style non-attachment: "Everything in this world is transitory. Why worry about what I can't control?" Later my view evolved still further, spurred by reports that Amazon expects this innovation to actually boost book sales. "Maybe this is a good thing," I decided. The process I went through, Libra, will be similar

LIVE COMEDY

BLIND PIG PUB AND GRILL 32 St. Anne St. St. Albert • Every Sun (8pm): Sunday Night Funnies with spiritual detective, Barbara May and guest

THE COMEDY FACTORY 3414 Gateway Boulevard (469-4999) • Rob Puc, Dec. 26-27 • Cory Harding, Jan. 2-3 (Fri, 8:30pm) • Attila Kun, Jan. 9-10 (Fri, 8:30pm)

FARGO'S 10307-82 Ave (433-4526) • Fargo's Laugh-a-Lot Comedy • Every Sun

RED'S WEM (481-6420) • Hypno Sundays. Sebastian Steel; Sun, Dec. 28; 9:30pm; free

THEATRE

BURLESQUE 11315-106 Ave (454-0583) • Presented by Azimuth Theatre • By Panties Productions • Jan. 9-25 • Tickets available by phone at 454-0583

CHIMPFOOT The New Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Long-form improvisational sketches performed by Rapid Fire Theatre's top improvisers • Every Sat (11pm) except last Sat of each month

DEE-NASTY Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave • Jeff Hadam, Stephanie Wolfe, Mark Meer, Josh Dean, Davina Stewart and Leona Brausen celebrate the 13th season of Edmonton's legendary live improvised soap opera by spoofing the '50s melodramas of Douglas Sirk and Grace Metalious • Every Monday (8pm)

GILLIAN'S ISLAND Jubilation Diner Theatre, WEM (484-2424) • A 10th-anniversary revival of this parody of the '60s TV series *Gilligan's Island*, about a crew of hapless sailors and their mismatched passengers who are washed ashore on a deserted tropical island during a violent storm • Until Jan. 25 • Tickets available by phone

INDIANA BONES AND THE RETURN OF THE MUTT SCHMELMUT Celebrations Diner Theatre, Oasis Entertainment Hotel, 13103 Fort Rd (448-9339) • Daredevil archaeologist Indiana Bones must save the day yet again when her archival Helmut Schmelmutter appears on the scene, once again bent on world destruction in this musical spoof of the *Raiders of the Lost Ark* series of adventure films • Until Jan. 31 (Sat 6:15pm, Sun 5:15pm) • \$44.95 (Wed, Thu, Sun)/\$49.95 (Fri, Sat)/\$20 (child 12 and under)/free (child under 2) • New Year's Eve: \$79.95, includes party favours, glass of champagne at midnight, midnight snack, dance with DJ after the play

THE INNOCENTS La Cité Francophone, 8627-91

to your own in 2004. I predict that an apparent loss will lead to an unexpected gain.

SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21

In last week's horoscope, I predicted that in 2004 you will have many exuberant exploits that spread joy and laughter throughout the land. Now it's time to reveal your other key assignment for the coming months: to seek out experiences that rouse reverence and awe. Do you have any heroes, Scorpio? Do you know anyone whose noble grace or healing genius takes your breath away? Are there any gorgeous works of art or natural wonders that inspire you to fall to your knees and shout "Glory in the highest!"? You need to put yourself regularly in the presence of marvels like that. For extra credit, create adventures in which you feel both worshipful adoration and rowdy pleasure.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

You'll have some heroic assignments in 2004, Sagittarius. They will challenge you to be both ingeniously creative and rigorously disciplined. Can you think way outside of the box without alienating those who prefer to live inside of the box? Are you open-minded enough to get fired up about experimental innovations, but authoritative enough to hammer out pragmatic compromises? Do you have the flexibility to be both a maverick and a leader?

CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19

Mountaintop perspectives will be your specialty in the coming months, Capricorn. You will be invited again and again to gaze at the big picture. To make sure you keep going with the cosmic flow, keep asking yourself the question, "What would the far-seeing, adventure-loving

St (420-1757) • Presented by Leave it to Jane Theatre • Jan. 9-18 (8pm Mon-Sat, 2pm Sun) • \$18 (adult)/\$15 (student/senior/elderly) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

LITTLE JACK HORNER The Prince of Wales Armouries, 10440-108 Ave, South West entrance (481-5964) • An old English traditional pantomime presented by Alberta's St. George of England Society • Sat, Jan. 3 (7:30pm); Sun, Jan. 4 (2pm); Fri, Jan. 9 (7:30pm); Sat, Jan. 10 (7:30pm); Sun, Jan. 11 (2pm) • \$12 (adult)/\$5 (child under 12)

OLIVER! Festival Place, 100 Festival Way, Sherwood Park (449-3378) • Presented by The Festival Players • Lionel Bart's rollicking musical adaptation of Charles Dickens's novel *Oliver Twist* about the adventures of a young orphan boy who falls in with a pack of youthful thieves on his way to fulfilling his life's destiny • Sat, Dec. 27; Mon, Dec. 29-Tue, Dec. 30 (7:30pm), \$20 (adult)/\$15 (student); Fri, Dec. 26 (2pm), \$15 (everyone); Sun, Dec. 28 (7:30pm), \$20 (adult)/\$15 (student); \$39.50 (adult, dinner/show)/\$34.50 (student, dinner/show). Tickets available at Festival Place box office, TicketMaster

ROCKIN' VEGAS Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Dinner Theatre, Mayfield Inn, 16615-109 Ave (483-4051) • A high-energy musical revue celebrating the music of Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Liberace, Neil Diamond, Wayne Newton and other performers associated with Las Vegas • Until Feb. 22 • Tickets available at Mayfield Dinner Theatre box office • New Year's Eve: \$135 (includes dinner and show)

SURVIVAL: THE IMPROVISATION GAME The Third Space, 11516-103 St (424-6304) • Live, competitive improvisational comedy with "an element of danger" • Jan. 2, 9, 30, \$5 • Tickets available at the door

THEATRESPOOTS Varcona Theatre, 10329-83 Ave (448-0695) • Presented by Rapid Fire Theatre • Teams of improvisers create sketches on the spot based on audience suggestions, and have the results evaluated by a team of heartless judges • Every Fri (11pm) • Tickets available by phone

THE WELL BEING Catalyst Theatre, 8529 Gateway Boulevard (431-1750/420-1757) • Part of Catalyst Theatre's Blind Dates With Theatre • The South African theatre troupe Mouthpiece Theatre uses mime, tape, a watermelon and a stage covered in newspaper to tell a fable about love, grace, justice, a purpose and two frogs • Jan. 7-11, 13-15 (8pm) • \$21 (adult)/\$16 (student) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

part of me do right now?" Your weekly schedule should always be spiced with tasks that serve your master plan. Now here's your thought for the week, which can also serve as your thought for the year: "When we stop learning and merely act from the knowledge we have accumulated, disorder comes." —J. Krishnamurti.

AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 18

2004 will be the Year of Games for you. Here are helpful guidelines, courtesy of programmer Garry Hamilton (www.c2.com/cgi/wiki/GarryHamilton). (1) If the game is rigged so you can't win, find another game or invent your own. (2) If you're not winning because you don't know the rules, learn the rules. (3) If you know the rules but aren't willing to follow them, either there's something wrong with the game or you need to change something in yourself. (4) Don't play the game in a half-baked way. Get all the way in or all the way out. (5) It shouldn't be necessary for others to lose in order for you to win. If others have to lose, re-evaluate the game's goals.

PISCES Feb 19 - Mar 20

I'm hopeful that 2004 will be the year you renounce your habit of taking on the roles of scapegoat and martyr. In fact, let's launch a campaign to do just that right now. The best way to begin might be to engage in one last self-mocking wallow. Tape a "Kick Me" or "Use Me" sign on your back. Attach a chain to a doormat and wear it around your neck like a big necklace. Invite friends to blame you for everything that's wrong in their lives. Take the whole shuck to the limit, in other words, Pisces. Feel how ridiculous it is. Encourage it to burn itself out in a blaze of absurd glory. And then walk away from it forever. ☺

free will astrology

BY ROB BREZSNY

ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 18

In book *The Degradation of Language and in Why We Should, Like, Care*, John Porter says he prefers the energetic of poetry slams to the "doggedly flat day poems" of more academic writers. On the other hand, the spoken-word stuff ventures beyond "alienation and bling," which limits its beauty and "The vast weight of human artistic movement was not created in indignation," he notes. Please remember that, Aries, anger will be good and strong in 2004. I help you tap into a lot of constructive energy. But you should resist the temptation to let it influence everything you do.

TAURUS Apr 19 - May 20

Are you're following your energy and do what you want all the time," says Age author Shakti Gawain, "the distinction between work and play dissolves." I want to add that you can go a long way blending work and play without trying to reach Gawain's impossibly high bar of all the time. It would be revolutionary to "follow your energy and do what you want" just 20 per cent more than your past levels. And the astrological omens of 2004 suggest that you can easily reach that. I say shoot for 30 per cent,

EVENTS WEEKLY

Fax your free listings to 426-2889 or e-mail them to listings@vuc.ab.ca. Deadline is Friday at 3pm

CLUBS/LECTURES

EDMONTON COALITION AGAINST VIOLENCE AND RACISM (E.C.A.V.A.R.) Mennonite Centre for Newcomers, www.wage-peace.org (988-2713) • General meeting • Sun, Jan. 11 (7-9pm)

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE See What's Happening Downtown

OPPOSE U.S. NATIONAL MISSILE DEFENCE COMMITTEE Roots, www.wage-peace.org (988-2713) • Planning meeting presented by the Edmonton Coalition Against War and Racism (E.C.A.V.A.R.) • Sat, Jan. 3 (3-5pm) or visit www.wage-peace.org

T.A.L.E.S. EDMONTON (423-2932) • Storytelling invitation: every 2nd Fri (8pm) • The oral tradition of storytelling (be a listener or a storyteller)

THE THIRTYAM BUDHIST MEDITATION SOCIETY GADEN SANTEN LING 11403-101 St (479-0014) • Learn about Tibetan Buddhism and meditation with Kushok Dharmchoe of Namgyal Monastery in India • Every Tues (7-9pm): beginners • Every Wed (7-9pm) and Sun (11am-1pm): advanced

QUEER LISTINGS

AXIOS (454-8449) • A support group, local chapter of the international organization of Eastern Orthodox and Eastern Rite Catholic Gay and Lesbian Christians

BOOTS AND SADDLES See What's Happening Downtown

BUDDYS NITE CLUB 117258 Jasper Ave (488-6636) • Open 9-3 • Dancing, strip entertainment, go-go boys • Every Mon. Free pool. DJ's Arrow Chaser, Jeffy Pop, Code Red • No membership needed

DIGNITY EDMONTON (482-6845) Support community for lesbian Catholics and friends

DOWN UNDER 12224 Jasper Ave (482-7960) • Steam bath

EDMONTON RAINBOW BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (422-6207) • An organization for gay men and lesbians in business and their non-gay friends to share business knowledge, learn, make friends and network in a positive, proud

space where being yourself is the norm

GAY MEN'S OUTREACH CREW (GMOG) See What's Happening Downtown

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY See What's Happening Downtown

ICARE See What's Happening Downtown

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB See What's Happening Downtown

INSIDE/OUT U of A Campus, www.ualberta.ca/~cled/eps/AgapeVerdiana.htm • Monthly meetings for campus-based organization for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) faculty, graduate student, academic, straight allies and support staff of the U of A to network and socialize in a supportive environment (fall and winter terms). Contact Kris Wells (kswells@ualberta.ca) or Marjorie Wonham (mwonham@ualberta.ca) for info

LAMBDA CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY CHURCH Garneau United Church, 11148-84 Ave (474-0753) • Every Sun (7pm): Worship services. Serving the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgendered community

LIVING POSITIVE www.connect.ab.ca/livapos (488-5768) • Edmonton Persons Living with HIV Society. Peer-facilitated support groups, peer counselling • Daily drop-in

LUTHERANS CONCERNED www.lcna.org (426-0905) • A spiritual community which gathers monthly for sharing, friendship, individual support and a safe space for our own spiritual questions

MARINE WAVE SWIMMING CLUB www.geocities.com/makingwaves_edm • Recreational and competitive swimming with coaching, beginners encouraged to participate. Socializing after practices • Practices every Mon and Thu

METROPOLITAN COMMUNITY CHURCH OF EDMONTON (429-2321) • Weekly non-denominational church services

PFLAG See What's Happening Downtown

POLICE LIAISON COMMITTEE (421-2277/1-787-882-011, ext. 2038) • Edmonton Police Service and the gay and lesbian community

PRIME TIMERS (426-7019) • Meetings every second Sunday of the month at 3pm. A social group for gay/bisexual men over 40 and their friends

THE ROOST See What's Happening Downtown

SECRETS BAR AND GRILL See What's Happening Downtown

TRANSSEXUAL/TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP See What's Happening Downtown

WOODY'S 11723 Jasper Ave (488-6557) • Open Sun-Thu 1-12; Fri Sat 1-3 • Gay nightclub. Every Sun-Tue (7-12am): karaoke with Tizzy. Every Wed: game show. Every Fri: free pool. Every weekend: open stage, dance with DJ Arrow Chaser • No membership needed

YOUTH UNDERSTANDING YOUTH See What's Happening Downtown

SPECIAL EVENTS

A CHILD'S CHRISTMAS IN WALES Rutherford House, 11153 Saskatchewan Dr (427-3995) • Reading of Dylan Thomas's story by Norman Thomas with musical accompaniment by harpist Gordon Ritchie • Dec. 26-28 (2-3pm); \$5 (adult)/\$4 (senior)/\$2.50 (child 7-17yrs)

CHRISTMAS BANQUET See What's Happening Downtown

DISCOVER THE DANCE AND MUSIC OF INDIA See What's Happening Downtown

ICE ON WHYTE FESTIVAL 2003 McIntyre Park, 83 Ave, between 103 and 104 St (439-9166) www.olderstrathcona.ca • Presented by the Old Strathcona Business Association and local business sponsors • Ice sculpting for children in the Small Fry Chippers Pavilion: weekends; ice dance skating: weekday evenings and weekends; holiday entertainment: weekday evenings and weekends • Until Jan. 4 (9am-9pm) • Free

TREE OF MEMORIES Beechmount Cemetery, 12420-104 St, and Edmonton Cemetery Mausoleum, 11820-107 Ave (496-6983) • Remembering lost loved ones at Christmas • Until Jan. 9

KARAOKE

B-STREET 11818-111 Ave (414-0545) • Every Wed-Sun (9pm): with Brad Scott

BLUE QUILL 326 Saddleback Rd (434-3124) • Every Fri/Sat (8pm)

AVENUE PIZZA 8519-112 St (432-0536) • Every Thu (9:30pm)

BILLY BOB'S SPORTS BAR Continental Inn, 16625 Stony Plain Rd (484-7755) • Every Thu (9pm): Musica Thursdays: Music trivia with Escapade Entertainment • Every Fri/Sat (9:30pm): Karaoke with Escapade Entertainment

BORDERLINE PUB 3226-82 St (462-1888) • Every Thu-Sat (9:30pm)

CLAREVIEW PUB Victoria Trail, 132 Ave (414-1111) • Every Tue (9:30pm-2am)

CLIFF CLAYVIN'S 9710-105 St (424-1614) • Every Fri (10pm)

DOYLE'S PUB 2619-151 Ave (473-1961)

• Every Fri/Sat (9:30pm): with Dee Dee

HILLVIEW PUB 311 Woodvale Rd, W, Millwoods (462-0468) • Every Fri/Sat (9:30-1am)

JIMMY RAY'S 15211-111 Ave (486-3390) • Every Sat (9pm)

MARK'S BACK PUB 13403 Fort Rd (406-5152) • Every Fri/Sat (9pm): with Shawn the Bomb

MICHAEL'S 11730 Jasper Ave (482-4767) • Every Mon: with Jammin' Jamie

OVERLAND RESTAURANT 12960 St. Albert Tr (454-0667) • Every Fri/Sat (9pm): with Big Time Entertainment

ROSARIO'S PUB 11715-108 Ave (447-4727) • Daily (9pm)

ROSIE'S BAR AND GRILL 10315-124 St (482-1636) • Daily (9:30pm)

SHERLOCK HOLMES 10341-82 Ave (433-9676) • Every Sun (9pm): with Scott

TODAY'S 5224-86 St (465-6223) • Every Fri/Sat (9pm)

WOODY'S 11725 Jasper Ave, upstairs (488-6636) • Every Sun/Tue (7pm-midnight): with Terrence; every Mon/Wed (7pm-midnight): with Anne

YESTERDAY'S 112, 205 Carnegie Dr (459-0259) • Every Tue (9pm)

NEW YEAR'S EVE

BILLIARD CLUB 10505 Whyte Ave, Ustairs (432-0335) • Black and White on Whyte: Formal • \$25 (includes hors d'oeuvres, champagne, dancing)

BUST LOOSE NEW YEAR'S EVE GALA TOUR (468-3087) • Club crawl, two packages • phone for information

CASINO YELLOWHEAD 12464-153 St (424-9467) • Corral Banquet Room: Dinner, DJ, and special appearances by Robin Kelly and Martin Andrews (tribute to Elvis and Rod Stewart) • \$26.96 (adv)

CELEBRATIONS Oasis Hotel, 13103 Fort Rd (448-9339) • Celebrations Dinner Theatre includes buffet dinner, the musical comedy Indiana Jones In the Curse of the Mummy, dance with DJ after the play • \$79.95 (includes party favours, glass of champagne at midnight, midnight snack)

CROWN AND DERBY Oasis Hotel, 13103 Fort Rd (448-9339) • Live entertainment • 7pm (door) • \$10 (includes appetizer buffet, party favours, glass of champagne at midnight) • Tickets available at the door

DOWNTOWN EDMONTON City Hall, Library and Streets around the Square (423-2822) • New Year's Eve Downtown: Klonkie Kate with her band Madison County inside City Hall

• Dance party on 99 Street • Children's entertainment in the library • Fireworks at midnight • 9pm-midnight • Free event

IRON HORSE 8101-103 St (438-1907) • Las Vegas theme featuring Los Vegas entertainers • semi formal • \$25, includes party favours, midnight champagne, buffet appetizers (6-8pm) • limited reserved seating before 8pm

MAYFIELD INN 16615-109 Ave (484-0821) • Grand Ballroom: Gala: Dance, music by the Pam Proud Band; 6:30pm dinner, party until 2am • \$87 (includes buffet dinner) • Tickets \$135 (includes dinner and show)

A NEW YEAR'S SALA 10018-105 St (996-2750) • Edmonton's Latin dance community featuring salsa, as well as merengue, bachata and R&B; a non-smoking event • 8pm (door) • \$15 (adv)/\$25 (door)

NORTHLANDS AGRICOM (492-2116) • vp.external@uad.ca • Hourglass Ball: Presented by The U of A Dance Club; ballroom dancing formal attire • 5pm-2am • \$60 (member)/\$12 (non-member), (includes a 4-course meal, dance performances, party favours) • tickets available at: Ticketmaster, 451-8000

THE ROOST 10345-104 St (426-3150) • Metal • Rock and Roll Fantasy: upstairs, new music, downstairs, retro music, rock attire • 7pm (door) • \$10 (member)/\$12 (non-member), includes buffet dinner and party favours

ROSARIO'S PUB 11715-108 Ave (447-4727) • Karaoke Central presents karaoke and dance until 3am • \$20 (dinner, includes dinner, prize draw, champagne at midnight) • \$10 (includes prize draw)

SCRUFFY MURPHY'S Whitemud Crossing, St, Whitemud (485-1717) • Green tie affair: \$35 (dinner, 7pm and 8pm seating); \$20 (pat only, 9pm) • includes party favours, DJ, dance champagne at midnight, 1am snack buffet, prize for the best green tie

THORNTON COURT HOTEL 99 St, Jasper Ave (423-9999) • Room with a view of the river, the Romance package • \$199 (includes a room, champagne, a box of truffles, 3-course meal, reception and dance with band)

THREE MUSKETEERS 10416-82 Ave (437-4239) • Five-course dinner; sparkling wine and party favours at midnight

WORLD WATERPARK WEM (444-5321) • New Year's Eve Family Beach Party • 6pm-midnight • \$49.95 (adv, family pass)/\$9.95 (each additional family member, up to 3 members)/\$19.95 (adv, individual pass)/\$59.95 (late pass)/\$24.95 (individual pass); includes mid entertainment by a band, food and drink specials, fireworks display at midnight • Tickets available at the Mall's guest services centre, main level, phase II

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GALLERIES/MUSEUMS

ARTSHAB STUDIO GALLERY 3rd Floor, Knol Building, 10217-106 St (423-2966) • Open Thu 5-8pm or by appointment • Artworks by Ryan Brown, Jeff Collins, Aaron Pederson, Tim Rechner, Paul Roberts, Gabriela Rosende, Greg Swain, Anna Szul, Eugene Uhuad and guests

EDMONTON ART GALLERY 2 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (422-6223) • Open Tue-Wed and Fri 10:30am-5pm; Thu 10:30am-8pm, Sat, Sun 11am-5pm. Closed Mon • **STORYBOARD** until Feb. 8 • **THE OTHER LANDSCAPE**: until Feb. 15 • **GODZILLA vs. SKATEBOARDERS**: until Feb. 22 • **KIM ADAMS AND DAVID HOF FOS**: until Feb. 22 • **CRAG LEBLANC WORK FROM THE SOPHOMORE LINK**: until Feb. 22 • **CHILDREN'S GALLERY-BECOME**: Curated by Don Moar • \$15 • \$12/\$10 (student/senior), \$5 (children 6-12)/free (member/children 5 and under)

GIORDANO GALLERY 10080 Jasper Ave (429-5066) • Open Wed and Sat 12-4pm, anytime by appointment • **SMALL WORKS SHOW 2003**: Artworks by gallery artists • Until Dec. 25

LATITUDE 53 10248-106 St (423-5353) • **MAIN SPACE: SPECTRONIC ESPERANTO** Paintings by Loren Spector; Jan. 9-Feb. 7 • **PROJEX ROOM: EXUBERANT NOTIONS** Fibre-based, 3D drawings by Richard Boulet • **UNINVITED GUESTS**: Montreal performance artists Jean Francois Prost and Marie Suzanne

Desilets; Jan. 9-Feb. 7 • Opening reception: Jan. 9 (7-11pm)

ROWLES AND COMPANY 10130-103 St (426-4035) • Open Mon-Fri 9am-5pm, Sat Noon-5pm • Blown glass sculptures by BC and Alberta artists including Mark Gibeau, Arte Vargas, Susan Gottselig and Marcia de Vique • Until January • **ALTERNATIVE EXHIBITION SPACES**: • **HOTEL MACDONALD**: Acrylic paintings by Steve Mills • **OXFORD TOWER LOBBY**: Oil paintings by Audrey Plannmuller • **THE BELL TOWER**: Acrylic paintings by Shella Luck; watercolours by Glenda Beaver; blown glass by Arte Vargas, Mark Gibeau and Marcia de Vique • **WEST-11 HOTEL LOBBY**: Oil paintings by Audrey Plannmuller • Until Jan. 29

SEGHRES STUDIO GALLERY 604A, 10030-107 St, Seventh Street Plaza, North Tower (425-6885) • Open Tue-Thu 5:30-9pm or by appointment • Artworks by David Seghers, Robert von Eschen, Eric Butterworth, Jeff Collins, Pamela How (Vilsec), Neil McClelland and Jacqui Rohac

SNAP GALLERY 10137-104 St (423-1492) • Open Tue-Sat (12-5pm) • **GLASS STATES**: Printmaking artworks by Mark Bovey • Jan. 8-Feb. 7 • Opening reception: Thu, Jan. 8 (7-9pm)

CLUBS/LECTURES

THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETPLACE Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers,

100, 10010-107A Ave (423-9683/423-9684) • Information sessions • Tue, Jan. 6, 13

LITERARY

AUDREYS BOOKS 10702 Jasper Ave (423-3487) • Jack Whyte reads from his new novel, *Cloth the Frank* • Mon, Jan. 5 (7:30pm) • Free

STANLEY A. MILNER LIBRARY THEATRE Sir Winston Churchill Sq • lower level (496-7070) J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*; reading by the Rev. Trasy Drifter; every Sun until Dec. 28 (2pm); free

QUEER LISTINGS

BOOTS AND SADDLES 10242-106 St (423-5014) • Large tavern with pool tables, restaurant, shows. Members only

GAY MEN'S OUTREACH CREW (GMOG) 45, 9912-106 St (488-0564) • Peer education initiative for gay/bisexual men that works toward preventing the spread of HIV by improving self-esteem

HIV NETWORK OF EDMONTON SOCIETY 105, 10550-102 St (488-5742) • Programs and support services for people affected and infected by HIV/AIDS and related illnesses. Counselling, referrals, support groups, harm reduction, education, advocacy and public

awareness campaigns

ICARE 702A, 10242-105 St (448-1768) • www.canalberta.org • The Interfaith Centre for AIDS/HIV Resources and Education (formerly Interfaith Association on AIDS) provides spiritual support and connections for those affected by HIV/AIDS

ILLUSIONS SOCIAL CLUB GLCC, Suite 45, 9912-106 St • Meetings every second Thursday each month

PFLAG GLCC, Suite 45, 9912-106 St (462-5958) • Meetings every third Tuesday of the month at 7:30pm • Support/education for parents, families and friends of lesbians/gays/bisexuals/transgenders

THE ROOST 10345-104 St (426-3150) • Open Sun-Thu 8pm-3am, Fri Sat 8pm-4am • **TUE**: Hot Butt Contest (8pm-midnight) with DJ Janny • **WED**: Amateur strip with Weena Lu, Sticky Vicky, DJ Alvaro • **THU**: Rotating shows: Ladonna's review, Sticky's open stage and the Weakest Link game second and last Thursday with DJ Janny • **FRI**: Upstairs-Euro Blitz: New European music with DJ Outlaw, DJ Janny and male stripper Downstairs-female stripper

• **SAT**: Every Sat like new years: Upstairs-Monthly theme parties with DJ Janny, new music with DJ Dan and Mike Downstairs-Retro music • **SUN**: Betty Ford Hangover Clinic Show Bush Bash; every long weekend with DJ Janny • **Tue-Thu** \$1 (member)/\$4 (non-member); **Fri-Sat** \$4 (member)/\$6 (non-member); **Sun** \$2

SECRETS BAR AND GRILL 10249-107 St (990-1818) • Lesbian and gay bar/restaurant

TRANSSEXUAL/TRANSGENDER SUPPORT GROUP egret@hotmail.com • Meetings every fourth Tuesday of the month • Information and mutual support for transgendered people in an open, friendly and safe environment. Open to transsexuals, transvestites, cross-dressers, drag queens/kings

YOUTH UNDERSTANDING YOUTH Gay and Lesbian Community Centre of Edmonton (GLCC), 45, 9912-106 St (488-3234) • www.youth.tribed.com/yuy • Every Sat (7-9pm) • A facilitated social support group for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgendered, straight and questioning youth under the age of 25

SPECIAL EVENTS

CHRISTMAS BANQUET Shaw Conference Centre (988-5433) • Dec. 25

DISCOVER THE DANCE AND MUSIC OF INDIA Stanley A. Milner Library Theatre, 7 Sir Winston Churchill Sq (420-1757) • Kriti Bhatnagar and friends • Tue, Jan. 6 (7-9pm) • \$11 (adult)/\$8 (senior/student)/\$20 (family, 2 adults 1-3 children under 16) • Tickets available at TIX on the Square

CLASSIFIEDS

If you want to place your Classified ad in **VUE WEEKLY** please phone Carol at 426-1996. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication.

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Must have mini-van or truck. Looking for reliable and responsible person.
Please call 907-0570.

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artist to artist

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ARTIST/NON PROFIT CLASSIFIEDS
Need a volunteer? Forming an acting troupe? Want someone to join with? Place up to 20 words FREE, providing the ad is non-profit. Ads of more than 20 words will be subject to regular price or cruel editing. Free ads run for four weeks depending on available space. For more info please phone Glenys at 426-1996/fax 426-2889 or e-mail: vue.ab.ca or drop it off at 10303-108 St. Deadline is noon the Tuesday before publication.

artist to artist

Sculptors' Association of Alberta next meeting, Jan. 14 (7:30pm) at the Kinsmen Club House (Located by the Kinsmen Rec Centre, next to the Tennis Courts) www.saa.ca or ph 432-1862.

Youth Art Competition-2004 Alberta Summer Games
Art competition opportunity for ages 12-17. Exhibit your art work at the 2004 Alberta Summer Games. Application and more information call (403) 918-3204 or hardie@colorfast.ca
Entry deadline February 2004

Ever Heard "Silence in Stereo"? Now it can be seen too. Only at the "Red Strap" Art Market, 97th and 103rd Ave. Look for the Strangely Artistic. 11am-6pm Tue-Sun.

To place your ad in **VUE WEEKLY Classifieds** Phone 426-1996 for more information

help wanted

Team Member- Part Time Required:

Colorfast in Riverbend Square, Edmonton's finest photo finishing and portrait studio is currently seeking outgoing and aggressive individuals with a desire to learn and excel in a friendly environment.

We are currently hiring for the position of **Team Member-Part Time**.

Applicants should have proven excellence in retail sales, with an unbelievable aptitude for 'best in class' customer service. They would also be willing to learn/already be proficient in Photoshop, portraiture, and exclusive retail sales. In return for the best job you've ever done, we offer you the following:

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Although hours are flexible, you will be required to work most weekends, holidays and some evenings.

Please forward your resume in person or online to:
Cindy Gannon
524 Riverbend Square, Edmonton
780-430-8322
cindy@riverbendcolorfast.com

artist to artist

Lifestrawing at Red Strap Art Market, 10305-97 St, 497-2211. Every Sunday (1-5pm).

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Join the International Marketplace. Looking for ethnic foods, crafts, products. Come to our free info sessions Tuesday evenings 6pm, Jan. 6, 13 at Mennonite Centre, 10010-107 Ave. Ph Allie at 423-9683 or e-mail: alam@emcn.ab.ca

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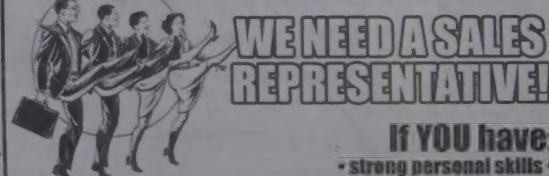
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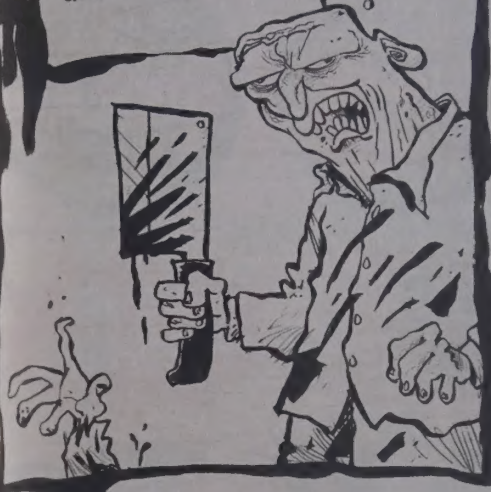
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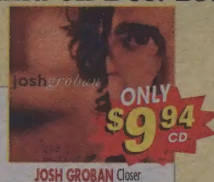
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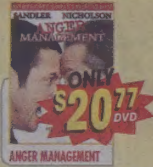
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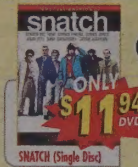
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